

# SOLDIER

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Peace on  
earth to  
men of  
goodwill

50 pfg FRANCE: 2 FR. 50. HOLLAND: 13 CTS  
BELGIUM: 2 FR. DENMARK: 30 ORE

Christmas 1945



# Personal Message from the C-in-C. Christmas 1945.

1. On the first Christmas Day since the war in Europe and the Far East has been won, let us look back with gratitude on the great victories and achievements which have been granted to the Allied arms.  
The evil which we set out to destroy has been destroyed, the world is at peace once more.  
Let us give thanks to

"The Lord mighty in battle"  
for sustaining us during the past six years.

2. Christmastide has always been the festival of  
"peace, goodwill towards men".

Today we join with our families and friends all over the world to give thanks for the gift of peace which has been given to us. And today we all sing the old carols we love so well: and which have a fuller meaning now that the war is ended

3. But Christmastide is also the festival of the family. We in Germany cannot just yet be reunited with our families; this must be a great sadness to one and all.  
In your name I would like to send them a message from all of us in Germany. I should like to wish them  
"Good luck and a happy Christmas".

4. We must also remember today all those who have given their lives in the winning of this war. They have paid the heaviest price of all, which was not asked of us who remain. They leave behind many for whom the joys of Christmas are full of sadness and the sense of loss.  
We will remember them: always. And we will be determined to build a future which shall be worthy of those who fell.

5. And so I should like to wish all of you who are with me in Germany today

"A MERRY CHRISTMAS"  
and best wishes for the New Year that will shortly be on us. Let us pray that our efforts to build a fair and lasting peace will be crowned with as great success as was granted to our arms in war.

B. L. Montgomery  
Field-Marshal,  
C-in-C.

Berlin.  
Christmas 1945.





*Aloft in the snows of Christmas we bear the Crusader's shield.  
The lilt of an English carol springs soft from a German field.  
There may be a long-drawn struggle till that Brave New World appears,  
But... here's to the toil without the blood and the sweat without the tears!*



# THESE WERE THE SIX GRIM YEARS

## 1939

**W**E wiggled our toes under the blankets and looked hopefully at the stove. On Christmas Eve we'd put a petrol-can full of water on top of it, hoping we should wake up to find a supply of hot shaving water.

Somebody got out of his bed and peered into the can. "It's frozen", he said.

That was the start of my Christmas Day, 1939, at Bully-Grenay, near Lens.

The drivers' billet of the Field Ambulance to which I was attached was in a barber's shop, with a corrugated iron roof that let the snow in. The stove stood in the middle of the room and was a good one of its kind — but not good enough to combat the Arctic conditions of that winter.

The roads were covered with ice and snow and after breakfast my CO asked me if I thought I could carry out my usual job of taking patients back to their units as he wanted as many as possible to be back with their friends for Christmas dinner.

I said I thought I could and started up my truck — a Bedford which had been a coal-truck before it was requisitioned. I put on a cap and muffler that the civvy driver had left in the cab — it must have been requisitioned pretty suddenly — loaded up with recovered patients and set off.

I had a few skids on the way, but managed to keep out of the ditch and took men to Arras, Lille and other

towns in the area. At midday I stopped and had a meal — just an ordinary dinner, not a Christmas one — at a ration dump near Vimy and got back to my unit about four in the afternoon.

I found there had been a fancy-dress football match between the sergeants and the privates. It was a good show they told me and I was sorry I'd missed it.

But I was there for the big show in the evening. Our Main Dressing Station was in a theatre, with patients lying on stretchers all over the auditorium and the stage.

We cleared a space in the middle of the auditorium for tables and all the patients who could get out of bed joined in with the Field Ambulance people for Christmas dinner.

That was the best feed I've ever had since I joined the Army — there was port and turkey, Christmas pudding and mince pies, and French wine for those that wanted it.

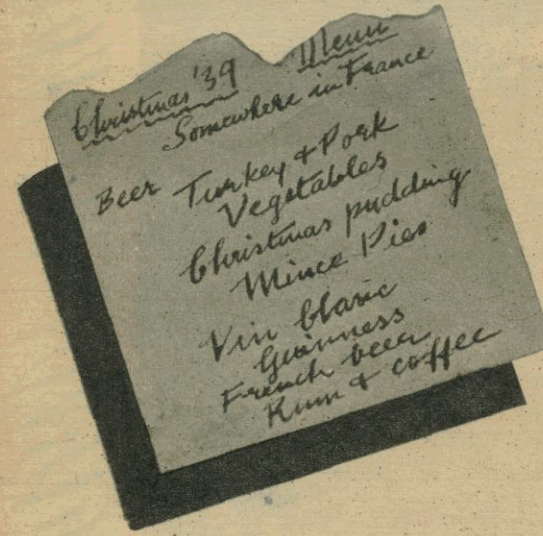
We had plenty of cigarettes — those were the days when we were getting lots of gift parcels from organisations at home — and plenty of beer because some of our ambulances were parked in the yard of a brewery. As a special treat we each had a small bottle of stout and that tasted fine after the watery French beer.

After the food we had a sing-song, of course. That was stimulated by any amount of coffee and rum, with which the sergeants had already been preparing themselves for the festivities in the local estaminet.

Altogether we thoroughly enjoyed that bit of the war.

That night, when we got back to our barber's shop next to the theatre, we optimistically put another can of water on the stove, for shaving water. It froze again.

J. R. W.



Right: The BEF in France had plenty of gift parcels, for the war was static and supplies were good.



## 1940

**A** CHOPPY Channel, ice on the roads, a wind that called for jerkins, leather, and helmets, Balaclava—Christmas 1940 on the "invasion coast".

We were the thin red line, probably the thinnest red line the British Army has ever had, for we had a troop of guns, and a company and a bit of Infantry, covering a front which had almost a Field Regiment and an Infantry Brigade to look after it when we got equipment and men, months later.

There had been 50 per cent stand-to for weeks, with the remaining 50 per cent within reasonable call and there could be no let-up for Christmas.

There had been bombing, machine-gunning and long-range shelling, but Christmas Day was quieter, for Jerry only came over for a quick shutti and turned home earlier than usual.

There was no ENSA and there was no rum. We put the finishing touches to a gun-pit. We had our own barrel of beer and our own pigs. The cook got drunk and had to be put on a "fizzer" by the Troop Sergeant-Major, who finished the cooking of the Christmas dinner himself.

We sang carols and felt miserable. We had our Christmas meal and lots more beer. The ground was so hard that the infanteers, a mile up the road, agreed that the proposed soccer match was off. So we visited each

other for drinks, a dozen men at a time. We all drank lots more beer and felt very cheered.

The meteor telegram came through — to our disgust — and took even longer to work out than usual. The police in a village 60 miles away reported that they had found two of our Gunners adrift without leave passes. The CO paid a visit. Evening approached and spirits, despite some half-hearted pranks, began to droop.

"I wonder," said a harassed troop commander, "if I ought to liaise with somebody?" He went and liaised, leaving his girl-friend's number in case he was wanted.

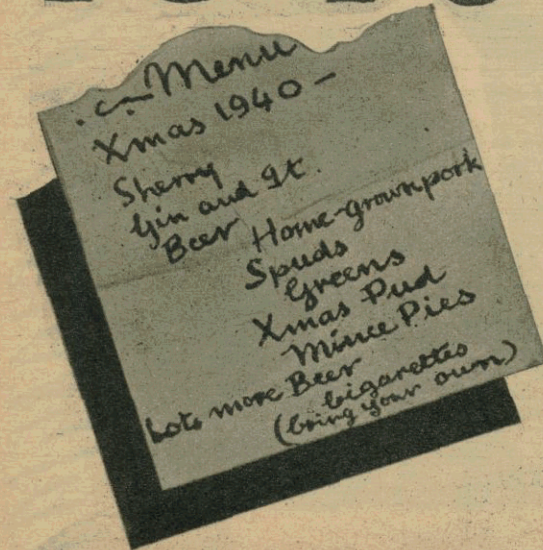
"I wonder," said the GPO, "if we ought not to collect some stores?" The BSM, without batting an eyelid, said he thought it was imperative and a three-tonner, work-ticket endorsed "collecting vital stores", ran a shuttle service so that everybody was able to spend a few hours in the nearest town at a large-scale "hop". Everybody, did I say? Three of us — two signallers and myself — spent a terribly cold night in a forward OP.

One of the OP party who had a slight impediment in his speech gave an alarm call which is still talked about in certain pubs.

"Holy sthmokel!" he yelled, early on Boxing Day, "Holy sthmoke — it's started!" Brilliant flashes were lighting the sky on our side of the Channel, and Troop, Battery, Regiment and Brigade had been notified by phone within a few seconds.

He needn't have bothered. It was all due to an early-morning electric train giving off weird blue lights and flashes as it passed over the frost-covered rails.

J. R. D.



Left: Britain's coastal batteries, front-line invasion defences, took on a new importance after Dunkirk



## 1941

**A** BOUT a week before Christmas the path to Tobruk had been finally opened and after the town had been cleared my company halted on the Gazala side, just beyond the Little White House on the top of the hill.

There were, you may recall, two White Houses. One lay, half bombed but defiant, by the harbour and was every sort of HQ in its day: the second stood alone above "Cuckoo", the wireless mast, and was a pretty fine affair with real glass in some of its windows.

The battle had begun on 18 November in a downpour, but by mid-December it was cold, with a nasty drying wind just sufficient to stop the puddles from freezing.

On Christmas Eve, in the middle of our carol party, a minor air raid developed over the harbour and the Ack-Ack flung everything they possessed into the sky. The next day business took me to the big White House and into the first real room I'd seen for six months. Here I ran into the first genuine loot (booty, perhaps, is a better word) of the campaign — a quantity of Italian brandy. Raw stuff, it's true, and weak enough, but the first spirit we'd seen in months.

It certainly improved our Christmas dinner, which we ate in a three-tonner. The only extra on the menu was a little Chinese beer which we'd managed to save. The NAAFI was non-existent and our Christmas parcels did not reach us until weeks afterwards.

We listened to the King's broadcast, heard the news of the fate of Hong-Kong and were cheered by the announcement of the capture, for the second time, of Benghazi. On balance we were fairly cheerful, but there

was nothing "post-prandial and full" about our feelings. "13 Corps live hard," said the Commander in his Christmas message, and he wasn't far off the mark.

By three I was on the road again and by nightfall a companion and I had reached a bungalow at the top of Gazala pass, determined to spend a night with a roof over our heads. But already in possession of the only habitable room were a very tired Tank Corps captain and an AIL0.

We were, by consecutive periods, arrogant, frigid, courteous and finally unbending to each other. In ten minutes we had reached the "After you, please" stage and in twenty we disclosed that our several private ration stores contained soup, M & V, tinned peas, peaches, NAAFI cigars, coffee and half a bottle of whisky. For the Western Desert in 41 it was a banquet. Before the night was out we had discovered a dozen mutual friends, produced pictures of our wives and families and were arranging to meet in Cairo or Tripoli.

We never saw each other again, but while it lasted it was quite a party. And like all respectable strangers meeting for the first time in a strange place we finished it off according to ritual. We sang (of course) "Auld Lang Syne".

P. Y. C.



Right: A famous landmark on the seaward fringe of the Western Desert — Tobruk cathedral



SEE OVER



# 1942

*Menu*  
Campo R6, 21 Italy  
Consommé au Riz  
Pudding de Boeuf et de Macaroni  
Pudding de Noël a la Croix Rouge  
Gâteaux Fruits  
Chocolat  
Figues séchées  
Lait concentré  
Café  
Cigarettes  
by Courtesy of the Red Cross

I CAN remember the very first moment of Christmas 1942. I was lying awake in my bed in the long, Italian barrack room where with 40 other prisoners of war I slept, ate and lived my life.

A few hours before we had been singing carols but now the camp lights were out and the room was in darkness. Then, from the other side of the room I heard a voice say, "Well, it's midnight. Happy Christmas, chums".

The greetings went swiftly around the room and the voices died down. Somehow nobody felt like talking and I guess many were thinking the same way as I was. I was thinking, "Here it is — first Christmas in the bag, I wonder if it's going to be the last." I remember I began to speculate on the war, figuring out just how long it was going to last.

But there wasn't much future in that, so I started thinking of Christmas at home in the days before the war, and feeling better inside turned over and went to sleep.

On Christmas morning we gave the room a good cleaning. We had decorated it with Red Cross parcel shavings and coloured paper, and someone had found a small bush and planted it in an empty tin. It didn't look like a Christmas tree but it was a gesture.



With a friend I decided to go for a walk around the camp. Outside we could see the beautiful snow-capped tops of the Grand Sasso mountains. That morning they stood out clean and majestic, with a wonderful feeling of freedom about them that seemed to make up for a lot of things. It was always good to look at them. After that I went to a camp pantomime rehearsal of "Cinderella". I was one of 10 chorus "girls" and though I say it myself we had the best set of legs I have ever seen in a chorus.

At lunch-time we had some special soup, cheese and a glass of Marsala wine. On the lunch table we each found a present from the Italian Commandant — a roll of toilet paper. A pleasant so-and-so, our Commandant.

In the afternoon I went to a carol service. It was rather funny really, some 300 of us shrouded in blankets to keep warm, and singing and looking like a lot of mad monks.

But the highspot of the day was the dinner in the evening. Enough to provide one Red Cross parcel between two had arrived in the camp a few weeks before. For the first time since I had been captured I really felt full after that meal, and the rest of the evening was passed with my friends, talking and playing cards. Nobody had any "hooch" so it was a quiet but friendly evening.

At 11 o'clock the lights went out and gradually the talk died down. Outside we could hear the sentry stamping in his box. From out of the dark someone said "Heigho, peace and goodwill to all men. I hope the — — — freezes."

"That's funny," I thought "nobody's talked about the war all day. It's good to forget it sometimes. Mm, it hasn't been such a bad Christmas after all." C. W. S.



Left: Perhaps the bleakest kind of Christmas was that spent behind the barbed wire of a prison camp

# 1943

*General Hospital Notchuna*  
Broth Soup  
Scorched Turkey  
Sage Stuffing, Roast Potatoes,  
Sage & Apple Sauce.  
Christmas Pudding Nocti-  
with real parlored Brandy Italian  
Coffee  
Beer, Marsala, Vino.  
Cigarettes free  
"V's" by the score  
Christmas 1943

IT was anything but a sympathetic turn of fate which saw me in hospital with jaundice during the Christmas of 1943; for this meant a fat-free diet and a complete abstinence from all those things which make a Christmas Day what it should be.

The General Hospital was situated in the small Italian town of Notchuna, surrounded on all sides by snow-covered mountains, the peaks of which you could see from the windows of the wards.

The staff consisted of British nurses, most of whom had seen service in the desert, and it was from them that the other jaundice patients and I were to receive the most human of Christmas treats, namely, the nurses' blind eye to the restrictions of our diet. The "fat-free" fare was, for this one day, to be forgotten!

I doubt if anyone had given a thought to the ancient tradition of a Christmas stocking, out there, to our surprise, on the end of every man's bed on this Christmas morning, were a couple of socks jammed full of chocolate, sweets, cigarettes, shaving brushes, soap and razor blades.

Our day started with an enormous breakfast: forbidden eggs, toast and marmalade. At eleven o'clock the nurses invited all the patients to a party where sherry, vermouth, vino and a punch were in anything but short supply, not to mention trays of chipolatas, roasted almonds, walnuts, cheese sticks, dates, raisins and other dried fruits. The wards had been hung with every conceivable Christmas decoration, and the whole



atmosphere was filled with the Yuletide spirit. "V-cigarettes were plentiful.

Our Christmas dinner was huge. Broth, soup, roast turkey, roast potatoes, stuffing, bread sauce, apple sauce, and green peas, followed by a Christmas pudding soaked in brandy which, through much bartering, the nurses had been able to procure. Our meal was rounded off with a bottle of beer or wine if you wished it.

The result of this monumental feast was a general retirement to the land of nod.

After having slept off our Christmas dinner we were confronted with a gigantic tea, consisting of cakes, fruit salads and every conceivable variety of cream trifle, though many who had shown their paces earlier were unable to do full justice to this unexpected spread.

After this many of us started filling the pages of our air-letter cards with microscopic writings of our Christmas festivities, prompted by an underlying touch of sadness which ran with our spirit of good humour. In each phase of the Christmas celebration, the carol singing, the stockings, the Christmas dinner, the tea, there was something to take your memory back and span the miles which separated you from all those at home.

In the evening, after our celebrations were over and we were lying quietly listening to the programme from England, I realised from the expressions on the faces of the other men that the efforts of the nurses had not been in vain, for they had achieved the one wish that must have been uppermost in every man's heart—to take them in spirit and thought to those most dear to them. C. D. M.

Right: 8th Army men find that fighting in Italy has its compensations—especially on 25 December



# 1944

*Menu*  
K RATION  
STEAK-and-KIDNEY POD  
(- if you're lucky)  
M and V  
CIGARETTES  
(- if you've got a K ration)  
Rum  
(- if you've saved your ration)  
Khabaw Valley

CHRISTMAS 1944, for the 11th (East African) Division, was a Christmas of expectations. We had done our job.

We had taken Kalewa, made a bridgehead across the Chindwin to let the 2nd Division go through to Mandalay and, tired but triumphant, feeling the strain of too much jungle and of air-dropped rations that had not always been well balanced, we were coming out for a rest in Assam. We were looking forward to rest, leave and, in many cases, to repatriation.

On Christmas Day the Division was stretched out along the road from Kalewa to our rest area — 250 miles as the crow flies but a deuce of a lot more as the road winds. A lot of the troops were being flown out — a big Christmas treat to simple Africans who had been wearing loin-cloths and living in mud huts only two or three years before.

For those of us who went by road, motoring was also a treat that day. Spots where we had remembered digging our trucks out of the mud — it had once taken me four days to cover 36 miles — we now whizzed past at great speed, over a hard, dry, wide road.

Most people had their Christmas dinner by the roadside or in half-finished camps. There had been no chance to lay in any extras and most menus were headed by M & V or bully. The only hooch was in the hands of those who had been thrifty with their rum ration. A few lucky ones had some of the precious tinned steak-and-kidney pudding.

There was a story attached to that particular ration. The Army Commander, Gen. Slim, had come to visit the Division and had enquired how we enjoyed the steak-and-kidney pudding. He was told we had never seen it,

so he immediately gave orders that we should get some. For the next two or three days the bully-bombers showered 'steak-and-kidney' all over our divisional area.

I was one of the luckiest people in the Division at Christmas. With a war correspondent in tow, I pulled into the Press Camp at 14th Army headquarters on Christmas Eve and there in a large mess basha, which had electric light laid on, and a large fire of fir-cones to keep us warm, everything was arranged for a real Christmas celebration, including the traditional feed, plenty to drink and even a party.

On Christmas morning my African driver, whose knowledge of English was only slightly larger than mine of Swahili, came to me.

"Mimi go charge", he said.  
"Who's put you on a charge? What have you been up to?" I asked.

"Hapana (not) charge — CHARGE," he answered, shaking his head.

This went on for some time until at last he said:

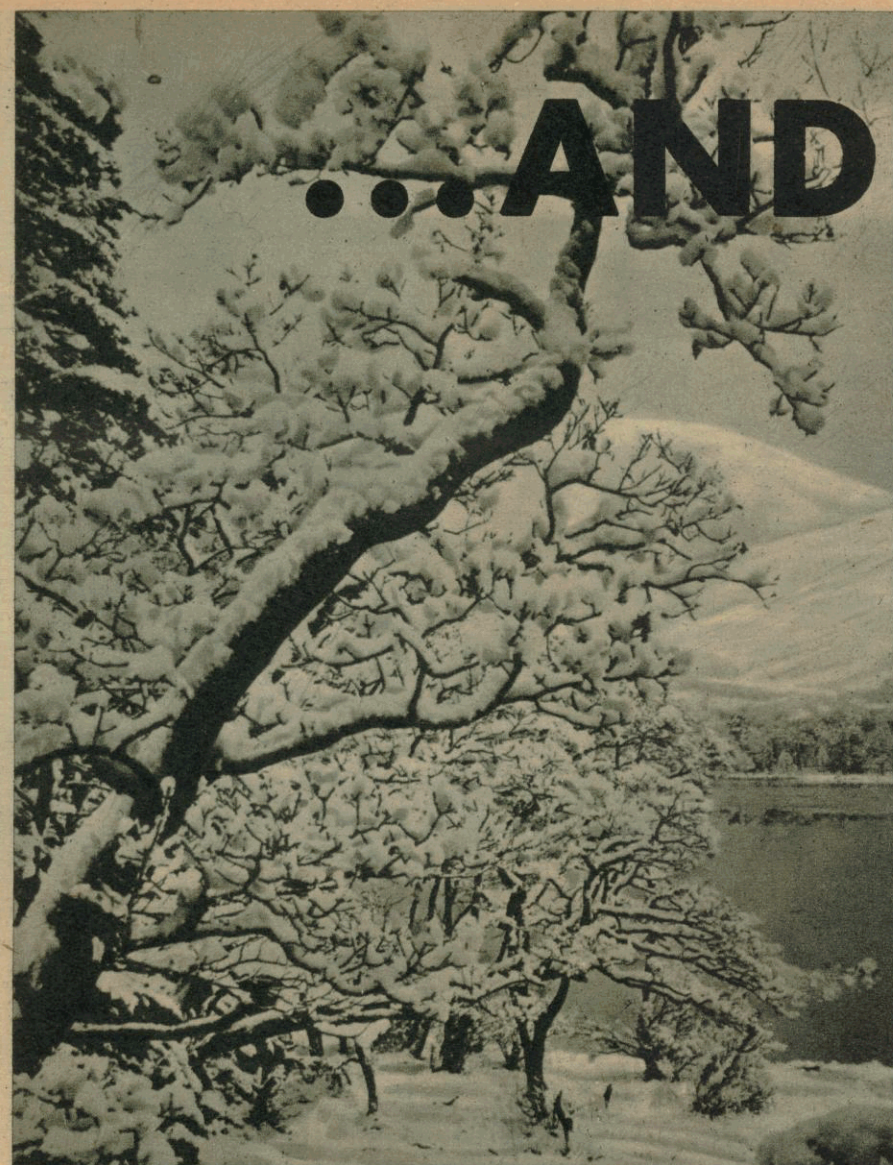
"Me want to go CHARGE — Roman Catholicki."

For most of the Division, and especially for the Africans, it was a pretty dull Christmas. But they made up for it a week later when, settled in our rest area in Assam, our Christmas goodies were distributed and we celebrated the New Year instead. R. L. E.



Left: Even the Burma jungle took on a festive air when the occasion was Christmas dinner





One thing survives through war unaltered—the beauty of the English countryside. Here is Friar's Crag, Derwentwater, in the Lake District, as it looks in the depths of winter.



Wines and spirits are scarce, unless bought off the "quota"—at a price! These rarer brandies can be bought over the counter in Soho—from £8 to £12 a bottle.



Evergreens are sold by the weight in Covent Garden. Mistletoe costs 2s 6d a lb, holly 6d to 1s. Christmas trees, medium size, are sold at 1s 3d to 1s 6d a foot.

# ...AND NOW FOR

THE walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove, from every part of which bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney...

"Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking pigs, wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam."

This was the great spectacle of festivity which the Ghost of Christmas Present provided for the reformation of Scrooge. This was Dickens' picture of all the good things that typified a Christmas of Plenty.

But then... "all vanished instantly."

Scrooge had no part of this Feast of Ample-ness. And, for us this year, only dim visions are re-appearing of the Christmases we used to know.

But there is some part of this joyous fare. There is living green galore. There is a turkey for every family in ten; not goose as well, neither game, nor poultry, but brawn and tiny joints of meat — well, fourpennyworth of corned beef and seven ounces of carcase meat, and extra sugar, 20,000 tons of it to share, straight from the Food Ministry's store.

## Best Seasoning

What else have we? Peace.

Peace after six years of war. Those years of anxiety, of suffering, of the fear of bombs, and of broken homes are fading memories. Hundreds of thousands of our men and women, back from war and the labour of war, are reunited. There are still many empty chairs before the not-so-mighty blazes, but there is hope that they will not remain unoccupied for too long now.

War, the Scrooge that has denied us the happiness of Christmas for so long, is but an ugly dream. The people are intent on making this the merriest Christmas that they can. They are reaching out through scarcity to find

joy for the children, the generation of children who for the most part have not known what Christmas is.

But it has not been easy.

Buying Christmas presents has been especially difficult. Shop early has meant something more than making purchases weeks ahead. It has meant getting to the store first thing in the morning before the best lines have gone.

Shopkeepers, instead of being supplied by the manufacturers in thousands, have had to make do with dozens. First come, first served has ruled their sales. Anything a little out of the ordinary disappeared from the counters within an hour of opening.

## Precious Coupons

Coupons have been another important factor in this controlled Christmas. People could ill spare them, even if coupon-goods were available. Worth for coupons has bracketed the slogan "Value for money."

Useful gifts — stores' designation for gloves, slippers, ties, stockings, etc. — have been scarce and coupon-expensive. Handkerchiefs — women's, four a coupon — were a better proposition.

There have been practically no novelties. The dearth has made people create their own. And there has been much sly home-making of wooden aeroplanes and trains, of dolls and golliwogs from the scrap-bag.

More unusual gifts are theatre tickets, a voucher for a treatment or permanent wave at a beauty saloon, a subscription to a bridge club, library or for a magazine. Cash vouchers, worth upwards of ten shillings, have been sold in large numbers for people to go along to a shop and choose their own presents — and incidentally use their own coupons.

The West End shopping area is a sorry sight. No big illuminated shop-front displays. Pre-war tinsel and colourful decorations, which have served through the years, are faded and worn out. Manufacturers cannot replace them yet. The woodwork needs paint, windows are still partially boarded. Biggest crowds of shop gazers are studying the window-shows of second-hand jewellery and trinkets.

Bookshops and stationers appear to be less affected. Everything is more



There will be a turkey for one family in ten. Ministry of Food have rounded up 1,413,000 birds from home and foreign farms. Retail price 4s 2d a lb, drawn and trussed.

# 1945!

expensive but there has been a reasonable selection of books, calendars, Christmas cards and diaries.

Shoppers calculate that generally goods are two-and-a-half to three times dearer than before the war.

There was a breath of Christmas in London at SSAFA's Christmas Bazaar held in Roote's showrooms in Piccadilly. The stalls and Christmas trees were gaily decorated with sparkling Cellophane. Cosmetics, soaps, antiques, books, glass, china, toys and foodstuffs were sold coupon-free to raise money for Forces' families. People who gave the articles had already surrendered coupons for them. Prettily-dressed real china dolls, with closing eyes, indeed a rarity, were sold at four guineas each. They were the gift of a manufacturer, bound by control to sell them only abroad.

Northerners will be getting most of the Christmas fruit. The south had their allocation when the orange boats were in a few weeks ago. It is the same with imported apples. No nuts are being brought into the country, but there are grapefruit from Palestine.

Bananas are due in the new year, but the fruit will have to ripen off in the storage chambers for about a week and so will not be on sale until the middle of the month.

Despite the lack of fruit there is a strong flavour of Christmas about Covent Garden. For the past two weeks porters have been handling lorryloads of holly, mistletoe and Christmas trees sent up from the Home Counties and the West Country. The holly is well-berried, a sign, they say, of a hard winter.

## Flowers — For Long Purses

Flowers are fairly plentiful, but expensive, a showy chrysanthemum bloom costing upwards of 4s. Then there are miniature "orange" trees, dyed bullrushes and leaves, and silver-dipped sprays of privet, besides enough evergreens and floral decorations to brighten every home.

But Smithfield poulterers have only rows of bare hooks to gaze upon. The Food Ministry is controlling the distribution of 1,413,000 turkeys, reared at home, in Northern Ireland, Eire, and South America, enough, they say, for one family in ten. Price? Plucked 3s. a lb, drawn and trussed 4s. 2d. (2d. a lb dearer in the London area). For consolation dinners there will be some

geese, ducks, and fowls — or, maybe a tame rabbit at 1s. 7d. a lb if sold by the half or whole (1s. 9d. a lb in London).

The Smithfield wholesalers are receiving an allocation far too small to meet their demands. Birds have been shared out among the retailers as they have come along and there is no chance this year of the picturesque eve-of-Christmas turkey auctions in the market.

Many local butchers have put the names of their registered customers into a hat and drawn for who should have the privilege of buying a turkey or goose.

And provision merchants have held similar "free-ticket" raffles for Christmas puddings.

## Extra Rations

The extra Christmas rations are 1 lb of sugar, 4 ozs of chocolate and sweets, 6 ozs of butter and margarine, 6d worth of carcase meat and 4d worth of corned beef. Vegetarians get 6 ozs of cheese instead of meat.

So housewives have had to do much improvising and economising of the frugal rations to keep by a few ingredients for making Christmas delicacies.

Orange peel, grated, boiled in syrup and bottled, will serve for candied peel. Saccharine-sweetened tea has saved a little sugar; baby food has been used instead of tinned milk in rice puddings; liquid paraffin has replaced lard for cake-making. (The two latter practices are much frowned upon by the authorities.)

Austerity is just as keen in the cellar. Whisky supplies are down to forty per cent of normal. Regular customers only can hope for the odd bottle of whisky, gin, or rum from the "off-licence". Some imported wine has arrived but not enough to go round. Apart from these quota sales, buyers at the wine and spirit auctions have acquired fairly good stocks — at a price. In Soho there are over-the-counter sales of whisky, Black Label at £5 10s. a bottle, other brands a little cheaper. You can buy for £12 a bottle of brandy.

It will be mostly beer! For entertainment? Provincial centres have their pantomimes, and, in some places, circuses.

Christmas parties in the hotels and restaurants are booked right up.

Scarcity and labour shortage have kept counters bare, but this is a merry Christmas, the happiest for six long merry Christmas, the happiest for six long years. There are four days general holiday, families are reunited, more Servicemen and women than ever are on leave. The people are in the mood for good cheer. They will make this — A Happy Christmas.

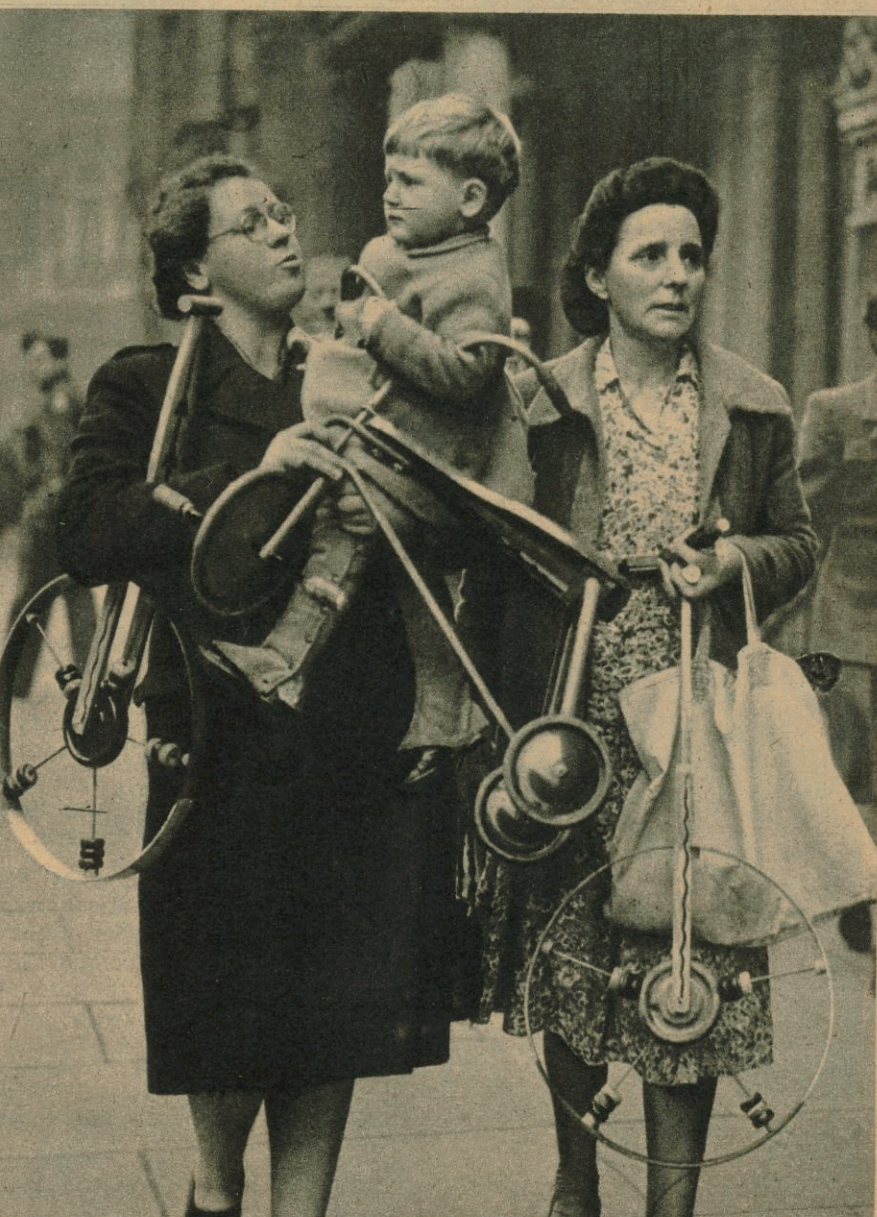
J. W. SHAW (Capt.)



Eight twelve-year-olds, Terry Juveniles, rehearse for "Aladdin" at the Cambridge, one of the few London houses to interrupt the theatre-boom for pantomime this season.



The Christmas tree has returned — not, perhaps in its full pre-war glory, yet gaily enough decked to draw admiring gasps from children unfamiliar with such a sight.



After an eight-weeks toy search and a wait in an 8 am queue, two-year-old Gordon Orme, of Marylebone, bought a tricycle and pushwheel out of father's "demob" gratuity.

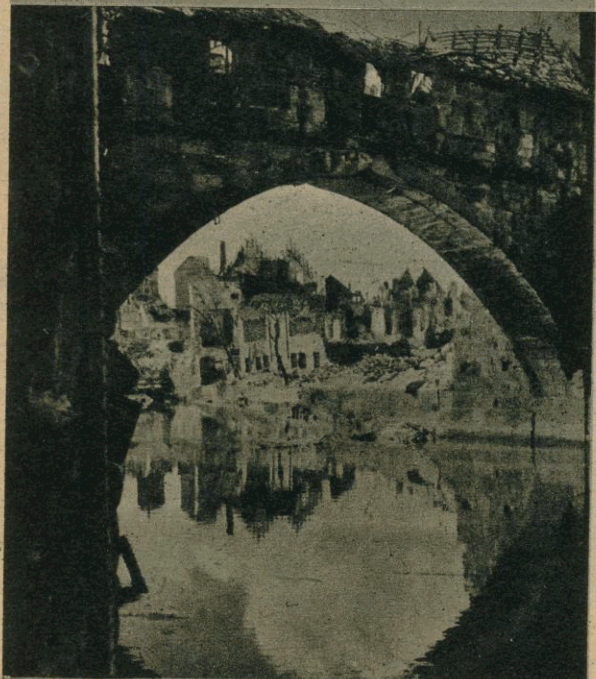




Nuremberg after its capitulation — it shared the fate of all German arsenals, and received 12,500 tons of RAF bombs.



Even in its ruins the city is picturesque. Above: part of the old wall, dating back 900 years. Below: the ancient bridge frames a scene of desolation.



## "...DEEP and CRISP

IN desolated Nuremberg there are still a few walls standing. At first sight they look like houses, but after a closer inspection they turn out to be empty shells. Some even lack the shape of buildings: they are bedraggled skeletons which seem to mock the traditions and accomplishments of earlier days. They are like dead men enjoying a bitter joke about their lives. A woman, shawl over her head and dressed in black, walks between the ruins and the rubble fields, carrying a can of soup in her hand and a meagre bread ration under her arm. She looks hungry — perhaps for food, but more likely for the past. She has already forgotten the taste of comfort and luxury.

A jeep goes by, crammed with American military police patrolling the streets. Then a staff car, English this time, heading for the court house. Bit by bit the Germans are able to watch the machine of retribution catch up with their leaders. The spectacle is a sombre one.

### Once Europe's Centre

Where today there are ruins and debris there once stood elegant timbered houses, shapely church steeples, and the colour and beauty of a town of art and scholarship. There the leading classical painters created their visions, renowned sculptors turned blocks of marble into priceless

statues, and, at the back of a cobbler's shop, Hans Sachs wrote his lyrical poems. Nuremberg, then a half-way house in the journey from the Northlands to Italy, the South and the East, was famous for its craftsmanship and learning. Some called it the centre of Europe.

Early history of Nuremberg is confused and thin, and it is not until the Middle Ages that we find a solid picture beginning to emerge. The town, which was ruled by an assembly of nobles known as the *Geschlechter*, became the residence of German monarchs who lived in the *Kaiserschloss*, an elaborate castle standing on a rock to the North. In 1219 Frederick II conferred upon Nuremberg the rights of a free imperial town.

Later, in 1356, the Emperor Charles IV became so charmed with his home that he issued a Golden Bull declaring that every Emperor should hold his first diet at Nuremberg. It was with these honours that the town, already on the fringe of prosperity, began to extend a considerable influence over the surrounding countryside. In time it held sway over 500 square miles, and was able to furnish the Emperor with 6,000 troops.

A large percentage of the town's population comprised members of the artisan class. Skilled craftsmen with imagination and ideas of their own: the inventors of watches, the airgun, celestial and terrestrial globes, and the art of wire making. At times there were conflicts between these men and their patrician rulers, but



The Nazi festival centre as it was in the days before the war: a city renowned throughout Europe for its medieval buildings and toy-making industry.

## and EVEN"

the patricians succeeded in maintaining their power until the early 19th century, when, enfeebled and degenerate, they finally collapsed, and the town was annexed to Bavaria.

But this is Christmas, and among its chief associations is that with King Wenceslas who, contrary to the character set forth in the song, was a weak and unstable individual whose philanthropy amounted to little more than an occasional hobby. He was born at Nuremberg on 26 February 1361. His career as a monarch, from his ascent to the throne of Bohemia at the age of two to his death in Prague in 1419, is the story of an unsubstantial rule rendered still less effective by constant feuds and bickerings within his realm.

### Back Room Toys

At the height of his power he was ruler of Bohemia and the German Empire, but through his own weakness and vacillation his power steadily dwindled until he was left only with the throne of Bohemia, and later was arrested by his half-brother Sigismund, after which he was thrown into prison in Vienna.

King Wenceslas is by no means the town's only connecting link with Christmas, for Nuremberg is the birthplace of countless dolls and toys. Family affection, which in Southern Germany and Austria was deeply implanted in the German heart, reached its climax at Christmas when trees were brought in from the pine forests, and toys were distributed to the children from their boughs. These toys were the products of Nuremberg craftsmen: in many a narrow street the back room of a toyshop had been

converted into a workshop where an old toymaker and his sons might be found carving wood or moulding wax, while the women of the family would be engaged in making clothes for some miniature Prince Charming or Pinocchio.

Toys and dolls have long been a tradition of Southern Germany. In many an old steeple, a small group of miniature bellmen once emerged from entrances on either side of the clock bell to strike out the time with hammers at every hour. Then there is the German love of marionette shows: exquisite little plays ranging from "Puss in Boots" to dramas written especially for the puppets, and acted with all the glitter and pageantry attending a full-sized theatre. Southern Germany was a children's country — the land of the brothers Grimm, of pantomime and fantasy.

The toy industry of Nuremberg will continue. It is a hopeful sign when one considers that, whereas political tyrannies come and go in a matter of years, the germs of craftsmanship are too deeply rooted to be dispersed by even the tempest of war. In modern Nuremberg there is

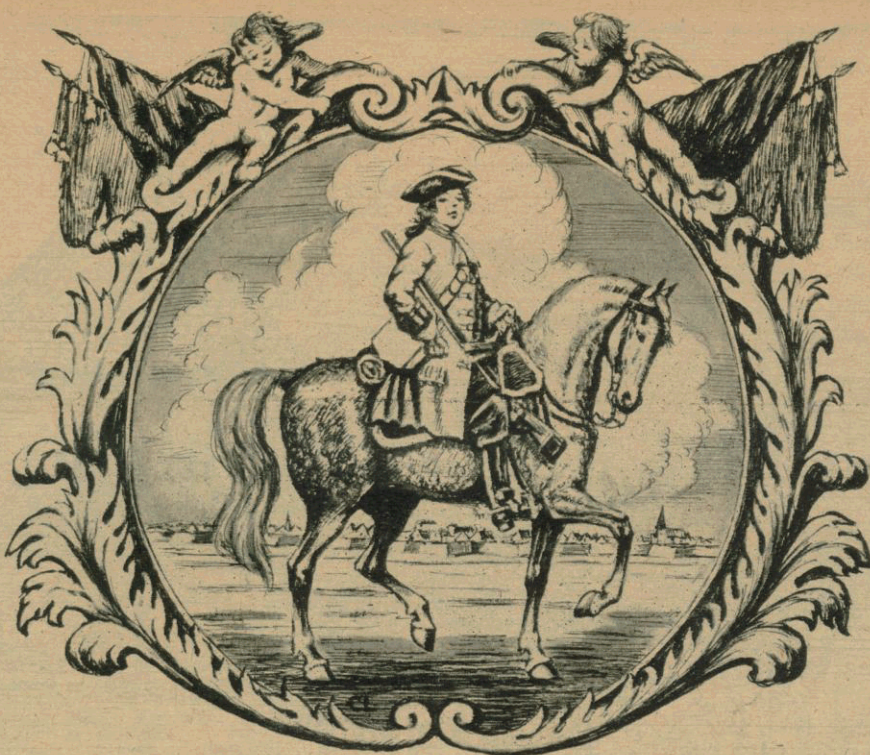


Wenceslas, King of Bohemia. The song flatters him.

still an old toymaker living among the ruins who will occasionally take his waxen children from their dusty cupboards, and play with them, half sad and yet happy with these fragments of his past. This year there is insufficient material for him to resume his work, and even when the situation improves he may find his craft converted into a large-scale industry. Whichever way he looks the old way of living seems out of focus: his only consolation lies in his accomplishments and a vague hope that some day, somewhere, somebody may wish to buy the work of a pure craftsman.



One of Queen Anne's most faithful soldiers was a woman. Trooper Welsh's wits — and her sword — were a match for any man.



She revelled in a rough and tumble — and the rougher the better. At the end she became an honoured pensioner of the Royal Hospital.

## THE STORY OF MRS (T<sup>PR</sup>) WELSH

THE British Army has had some strange recruits in its time, but few have equalled the record of Private — later Trooper — Welsh, who carried through an extraordinary masquerade in the time of Marlborough's wars. Even more surprising, when the impersonation was discovered the audacious trooper was not only held free from all blame, but received high commendation from the CO.

Christian Welsh, or "Mother Ross", as she was afterwards called, was born in Dublin in 1667, the daughter of a wealthy brewer who also went in for farming. She is first heard of on the farm, handling the flail and pitchfork with as much skill and strength as the farm servants. She was a daring horse-woman, riding astride bareback and jumping hedges and ditches with abandon.

When her father died she had a lean time until she inherited from her aunt a prosperous Dublin alehouse, which she seems to have managed with considerable success. She married one of the servants there, named Richard Welsh, and had three children. All seemed set for an uneventful life until the incident occurred which changed her whole career.

### Simple Disguise

Her husband was betrayed by a false friend and "shanghaied" into William III's army in the Low Countries. When she received a letter from him telling the story she decided to join a regiment bound for the war in the hope of finding him. So she distributed her children and furniture around various friends and relations and leased her business. Then she cut her hair, dressed up in a suit of her husband's, put on hat, wig and silver-mounted sword and quickly got herself enlisted as "a brisk young fellow" under the name of Christopher Welsh.

With the other recruits she landed in Holland, where she drilled with such smartness that she drew the attention

— though not too closely — of the company officers. Her first engagement was the battle of Landen, where she was wounded in the ankle by a bullet, but after two months was back again with her regiment. Then, while out with a foraging party, she was taken prisoner by the French and sent to St. Germain-en-Lay, but rejoined her regiment when an exchange of prisoners was made. The regiment went into winter quarters at Garcum, where, she says, "her grief for her husband being drowned in the hopes of finding him, she indulged in the natural gaiety of her temper and lived very merrily."

### Eternal Triangle

To pass the time she amused herself making love to a rich burgher's daughter who was young and pretty. But she was

While in hospital she was able — nobody knows how — to conceal her sex and was back with her regiment in time to serve with it at Blenheim.

And then she found her husband.

It was unfortunate that she found him embracing a Dutch girl, but she accepted the extenuating fact that he had never had an answer to the letters he had written her, and a reconciliation followed. She staggered him by saying that she had taken such a fancy to Army life that she intended to remain a trooper of dragoons and that in future he was to pass himself off as her brother, and that if ever he betrayed her secret he would find her a dangerous enemy.

He was not long bound to his vow. His wife continued serving with her regiment until the battle of Ramillies, when at the end of the day she was

band wherever he went, going into the firing line and even in the underground fighting of mine and counter-mine, or running considerable risks in taking a hot meal or a bottle of wine to him in the trenches.

She seems to have become a character well known throughout the Army, and to have enjoyed exceptional privileges. Her adventures from now on are a series of rough and tumble fights on the least provocation, practical jokes of a broad nature and the most barefaced acts of looting. Another side of her nature is shown by stories of her bringing in a badly wounded soldier under heavy fire or assisting the surgeon in his duties in the field.

### Her Nickname

At Malplaquet her husband was killed, and her grief at his loss was so great as to attract the sympathy of a Captain Ross. This compassion of the Captain led to her being nicknamed "Mother Ross", by which she became generally known to the Army. Later she married a grenadier in her husband's regiment — chiefly, it would seem, to look after her horse — but he also was killed in action.

When the campaign ended she returned to England, where she petitioned for a gratuity. This was granted, but the Treasury proved somewhat niggardly in the paying of it. She smartened them up by petitioning her influential friends again, after which there was no more trouble.

The last exploit of the former dragoon was a fight with a Chelsea Pensioner. Kit, who was also an out-pensioner at the Royal Hospital, was coming away, having drawn her pension, when she fell into an argument with her neighbour about whether their pensions were in proportion to their war service. The quarrel rose to such a pitch that the pensioner drew his sword. Kit, though only carrying a stick, disarmed him and broke his hand.

During her last years she suffered greatly from a complication of ailments and lameness from her old wound. She died in 1739, at the age of 72, and was buried in the Royal Hospital with full military honours.

BY  
CECIL C. P. LAWSON

not the only one in the field. A serjeant of the same regiment was also paying her court. As his technique was the caveman kind, the young lady complained to Private Welsh and asked "him" to revenge the affront offered her. Kit sought out her rival and told him that his conduct made him unfit to wear the King's uniform and cast a reflection on the whole regiment. The affair ended in a duel, the serjeant being wounded in the chest and thigh, while Kit had a long gash in her right arm. She was imprisoned, but when the burgher's daughter made her father reveal the facts Kit was released and her sword returned.

Though Kit was discharged from her regiment after the duel, she was not discharged from the Army, so she joined the Royal North British Dragoons and served with them at the siege of Namur. She also took part in various cavalry actions, in which she showed much bravery. At the battle of Donawert, where the regiment was heavily engaged, she was wounded in the hip, but remained on the field, sitting at the foot of a tree and encouraging her comrades.

struck on the head by a piece of shot and her skull fractured. She was taken to hospital and her sex discovered, a fact which caused her greater suffering than the pain of her wound.

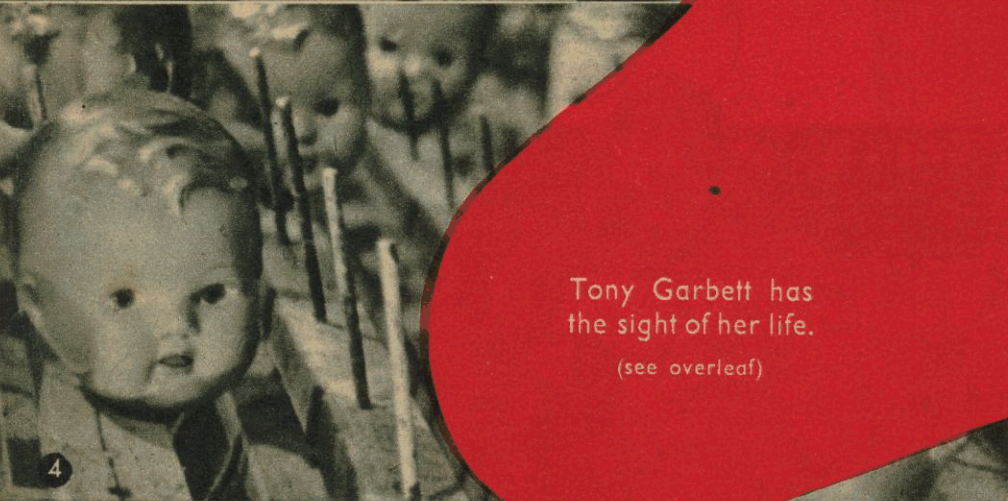
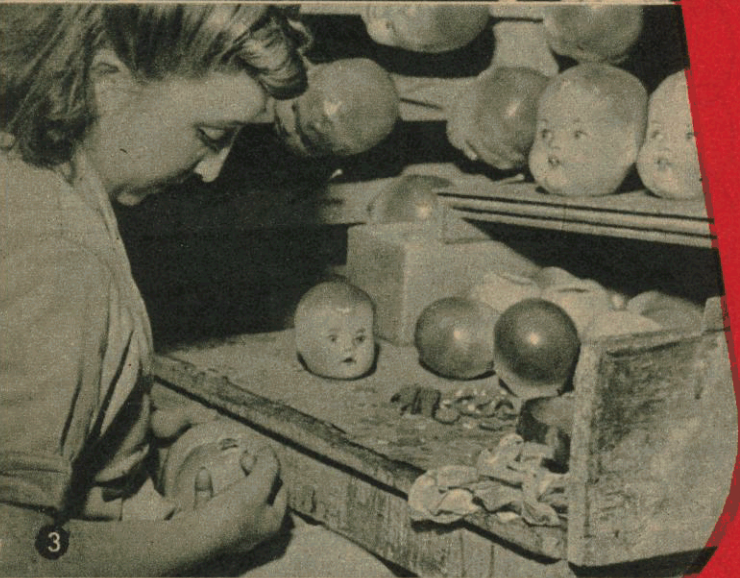
### Colonel was Pleased

The news of the discovery ran like wildfire and reached the ear of the colonel, who gave orders that she should want for nothing, and that her pay should be continued until her wound was healed. When she was well enough to leave hospital he sent her a parcel of shirts and sheets, Brigadier Preston presented her with a silk gown, and all her officers contributed something requisite for the dress of her sex, and "dismissed her from the Service with a handsome compliment."

There was a new wedding to celebrate the reunion of the couple, conducted with great solemnity, and on taking leave every officer "kissed the bride; at the same time leaving a gold piece, some four or five," to set her up in life again.

But she continued to follow her hus-





"Look -  
Real Toys!"



Tony Garbett has  
the sight of her life.  
(see overleaf)

1. "Below ACC standard perhaps, but I'll be nicer cooked and moulded."
2. "Shellpink cellulose for my face, light brown for my hair."
3. "These prefabricated teeth are really quite painless."
4. "Yes, we have to queue for bodies here."
5. "Clothes are awfully short in England just now."
6. "Perhaps it's as well we're off to sunny South Africa."





"DEAR SANTA CLAUS,—These are the loveliest dolls I've ever seen. Must they all go to the little girls across the sea? . . . ."



"I like those toy soldiers, too, with their gay colours and shiny hats, with arms that move and heads that turn. . . ."



(Above, right) "Or, could I have this cuddly bunny? He'd be so cosy at night, in bed. I'd never keep him in a hutch. . . ."

(Below) "I would play for hours with this clockwork lorry that pulls its load across the floor. . . ."



## "— Can I have just one, Santa? "



A FAIRY-TALE came true—for a while—for Tony Garbett, aged four-and-a-half, who lives in Hampstead Garden Suburb, when she went on a joyous trip to Toyland, to a factory where they make real toys.

It was a wonderful adventure for this little girl, who has lived all her years in a war-buffed London. She had never seen such lovely toys before. Now she saw them being made in workshops which until recently were turning out Sten guns and other "warlike stores". There are not many toys being made yet, not nearly enough to go round, but a start has been made. The toys are better, and there are more of them this year than last.

### Marked "For Export"

Tony saw really big and pretty dolls, prams, dolls' houses and big woolly animals on which she could sit and be pushed about: tricycles, rocking horses, trucks that went by clockwork. But most of these delightful toys must go to boys and girls in other countries.

This shortage of toys at home is all because of Three Bears—"bugbears" the toymaker called them—named Quota, Price Ceiling and Scarcity.

Quota will not allow the manufacturers to produce more than 35 per cent of pre-war output. This is measured on a cost basis, and so, because everything is so much dearer, there are fewer toys for the same cost.

Price Ceiling limits the maker's cost to 10s. for each toy. That is why there can be no elaborately dressed dolls or electric trains. With purchase tax the retail price has now swelled to 24s. 5d. and that is the maximum price that the shopkeeper can charge.

Neither of these two has any say in the toys needed for export.

### Trickle of Material

In that direction it is Bruin Scarcity who waves the ruling hand. With miserly clutch he hugs the key of the store cupboard holding materials—wood, rubber, metal—and will only open it to exchange the contents for foreign credit. That is why there are so few toys for the children at home. There is not enough material left to supply the home market after foreign needs have been satisfied.

That is why parents find it so difficult to find good toys for their youngsters in the shop. Biggest supplies available are kits for making scale-model aeroplanes, modelling clay and rag animals, though, as likely as not, the teddy bears' ears will be lined with a floral chintz.

Christmas crackers are practically unobtainable, and most of the tree decorations will have to be home-made.

But there were three kind bears in Tony's story-book, and she will hopefully hang up her stocking just the same.

"Now, aren't they funny, this dancing pair that turn about as the wheels go round! . . . ."



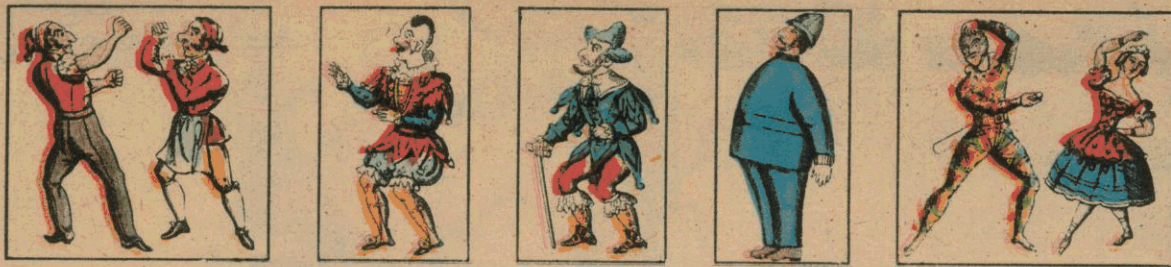
"I simply must have a tricycle to go shopping with mummy on, or to go to school. . . ."



"Or, best of all, a rocking horse. That is my chimney, just over there. . . . TONY."







Traditional characters of pantomime are Pierrot, the romantic clown; Columbine, whom he woos; and Harlequin, who wins her, while Pantaloon looks on in dismay. Here they are, with some of their assistants in the Harlequinade.



SOME sage has remarked that three people go to one pantomime for three reasons. Father for the legs, the kiddies for the clowning, and Mother to remind herself that she's still nearer 40 than 50. Whether or not this saying is correct is immaterial; the fact remains that pantomime symbolises all that we think of the theatre at Christmas time. Like most of our traditions, we tend to treat this seasonal entertainment as something which just happened, whereas, above all other play forms, it dates back to the origins of drama.

#### Religious Origin

The theatre with the Chinese, as with the Greeks and ourselves, had a religious origin. It was partly a ritual, and partly a means of mystical instruction. For this purpose a collection of some 50 legends, each equipped with set characters but with no written dialogue, was established; and, the producer having decided upon which of the 50 he was going to present, the task of creation was left to the actors, who had to make up the play as they went along. The link between this early form of entertainment and present day pantomime is an obvious one. Cinderella, Dick Whittington, The Babes in the Wood, may be likened to the set plot, and the set characters speak for themselves. Where would Cinderella be without Buttons, or Jack and the Beanstalk without the flannel under-

# 2545 YEARS OF PANTO



Thomas Thorne, pantomime star of the 1870's.

wear line of jokes of the Widow Twankey? Incidentally, while mentioning this worthy lady it might be amusing to remember that her name is derived from an old, and now obsolete, English word for a cup of tea.

From the Chinese we might follow our line of thought through the Greeks, who

originated the chorus as a means of explaining the plot to the less comprehending members of the audience, the Romans who started a school for the development of scenic effects, and who had a nasty trick of casting a gladiator as villain in order that he might actually die the death which virtue plans for such people, and

Perhaps the Chinese were first — as in many other things — to have the idea of piling on costumes and scenery to add to the glamour of their productions. The scene shown in this 18th century print must have hit the gallery right in the eye. The orchestra looks a bit browned off, though, striking that austerity note.



so, through the early English Nativities and Moralities, to Shakespeare and the beginnings of an English theatre. Time and space, however, do not permit of detail, so let us jump into the 18th century and take up the strings from there.

the short play had difficulty in completing its course through the jeers and brickbats which were flung at it.

Towards the 1880's pantomime was falling upon hard times, and an enterprising manager by the name of Sir

Augustus Harris felt the need for a new and more elaborate scale of production. He eliminated the curtain-raiser, jazzed up the music, replaced the over-dressed principal boy by a disarming hussy clad in pink tights (in those days the height of naughtiness), and produced scenic effects on a scale

Pantomime in the true meaning of the word means a performance enacted by means of gesture, body movement, and music. The spoken word is not included in this definition. The art was considerably influenced in Great Britain by an Italian company known as the Commedia dell' Arte, who gave a show of pantomime interrupted by extempore clowning and wisecracks. To this skeleton were added three set characters: Pantaloon, personifying an old man braying in his dotage; Pierrot — the freakish, pathetic youth with romantic leanings, who always loses his girl; and Harlequin, international, swaggering, and utterly sure of himself. It was with these characters that pantomime began, in the middle of the 18th century, to assume the form of a Harlequinade.

But theatrical producers are a progressive breed, always on the look-out for some innovation which will attract bigger and better crowds. They were not content to let pantomime remain the mute simplicity of movement — they wanted more. Accordingly they hired playwrights and songwriters to compose spoken plays upon which to hinge their Harlequinades. These authors adapted such old legends as Dick Whittington and the Babes in the Wood, which had been employed at an earlier date, but in a less extravagant manner. In 1715 a version of the Babes in the Wood had been produced at Drury Lane in which the Babes died in the end, and were buried in leaves by a robin redbreast—which ending sent the audience away in "most tragic and seemly tears."

#### Gallery Was Rude

By the beginning of the 19th century pantomime as we know it today was well under way, but not on its own. Originally it was prefaced by a full-length play (they liked their money's worth in those days), then later by a curtain-raiser which aroused the antagonism of the gallery. These worthy people had come to watch the antics of Harlequin or Pantaloon, and they could not be bothered with an *hors d'oeuvre* from the hands of some indifferent playwright. Accordingly they conveyed the fact across to the unfortunate actors in loud terms, and

to make Ivor Novello topple off the crest of the wave. In spite of the Grundies who drew the line at pink tights, the new pantomime was a success, and continued as such through the days of Dan Leno, who was an expert at acrobatic dancing at the age of three, Vesta Tilley, who gave her first performance as a male impersonator at the age of five, and a host of other famous clowns and principal boys, to the present day.

#### Crowded Out

While it is interesting, and often necessary, to consider the past, our immediate concern is with the present. London is at the moment enjoying one of the greatest theatrical booms in history. But even booms have their snags, and the snags in this case amount to a shortage of theatres. Consequently the West End of London is only able to stage two pantomimes and two Christmas plays this season. At the Cambridge Theatre Binnie Hale is starring in Emile Littler's production of "Aladdin", and at the Adelphi there is Bud Flanagan, appearing without Chesney Allen for the first time in 21 years, in the role of Buttons in Jack Hylton's production of "Cinderella". Another version of "Cinderella" is being staged in Robert Donat's production of "The Glass Slipper", a Christmas play with music at the St. James' Theatre. In this production pretty Sara Gregory plays Cinders, while at the Adelphi Lois Green, a newcomer to the West End, is cast for that role. It is an interesting coincidence that both these young actresses were born in Australia. At the Scala Jack Hylton is responsible for this year's production of Barrie's hardy annual "Peter Pan", with George Curzon as Captain Hook, and Celia Lipton as Peter.

So much for the past and present of pantomime. What the future of this form of entertainment will be no one can say, but one thing is certain: the show will always go on, and wherever there is pantomime there will be laughter from the kids, Pa will get his taste of leg, and Ma will come away knowing full well that it's all a silly mistake and that she's only 39 anyway!

RICHARD GARRETT (Lieut.)



The story of Cinderella, or "The Glass Slipper", is one of the oldest favourites. Above (left): the Prince's envoy hands the Ugly Sisters invitations to the ball, while Cinderella looks wistfully on. Right: They persuade themselves that fine feathers make fine birds. Below: Cinderella's triumph — the pumpkin drawn by white mice turns into a golden coach!



Tights startled the Grundys of the 1880's, but there's nothing wrong with them as worn by Hermione French, who is principal girl in "Dick Whittington", at the Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham.







Photograph: M. Berman (Sgt.)

"Where shepherds watched . . ." A view from the top of the Convent, Bethlehem, of the Shepherd's Fields.

# The MESSAGE of BETHLEHEM

**U**ERTAINLY the Lord Jesus Christ was born on Christmas Day, but, just as truly, He comes to every one of us on that day. Thus, it is not a code of conduct which men have been discussing, rejecting, and accepting for nearly 2,000 years but the Person of the Son of God.

The little town of Bethlehem was overlooked by a Star because among its lowly dwellings there stood the Manger Throne of God's Son. By that Star the Baby was revealed to men and they worshipped Him as Saviour and King.

The Christian Church has been the "Bethlehem" of the Christian Gospel ever since. In spite of the sin and weakness of men, God has kept His Truth enshrined there. It is in the Christian Church that men find Jesus to-day and worship Him. He is revealed to them as a living, vital Personality and He offers them a transforming Friendship.

Our acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Gospel of Salvation determines two things:—

1. Our relationship with God.
  2. Our relationships with our fellow-men.
- The Heavenly Choir, singing before the shepherds on that Christmas Morning, told the same news:—

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

Today we express the same spirit, the spirit of Christmas, as we greet all and sundry with "A happy Christmas to you."

It is in this spirit and by God's Power that we can solve our personal problems, industrial enmities and international differences. Christ did not come on earth

merely to give us good advice and a perfect example. Much more. He came that we might have the Power to act on His words and to follow His example.

Ever since the first Christmas Day, His challenge has been the same. It has to do with God and our fellow-men. He is saying to you to-day, "Follow Me and I will give you work to do among men and the Power to do it."

What is this work He wants us to do? This He will show us when we make the decision to follow Him and to let Him share our everyday lives. He will guide and direct us when we are willing to say, "What do you want me to do, Lord?"

How do we get the Power to follow Him and to identify ourselves with His Cause in the world? The Power of God comes in many different ways, but these are known and proved:—

By Worship and Sacrament; by private prayer and Bible reading; by Christian service and Christian fellowship.

These are things which some people have given up and many others have never started. This has brought on spiritual starvation and accounts for our moral weakness. The neglect of God and His Service has caused men to fight and grab for themselves in the spirit of "To hell with the other chap." Thus men have stored up for themselves social injustice, wars and misery.

The shepherds did not leave their flocks and walk to Bethlehem to "see this thing which is come to pass" because they thought they would get something out of it. The Wise Men, following the guiding Star across vast distances, did not ask themselves, "What shall I get out of it?" Both shepherds and Wise Men came to give in worship, gold, frankincense and myrrh. They went away "praising God for all that they had seen and heard". That was the spirit in the hearts of those men at that first Christmastide.

How different is the spirit in the hearts of men to-day! With our National Days of Prayer and Remembrance Sundays, it might be said of us, "This people

draweth nigh to Me with their mouth and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me" (Matt 15.8).

That is a hard thing to say. Upon what evidence am I writing it?

I am writing it on the evidence of selfish, aimless lives; of rackets and dealings which exploit the needs of others; of dishonesty in small things as well as great; of actions calculated to bring gain to the doers but suffering to innocent thousands; of the increase of cruelty, impurity and discord in the world. I am writing it on the evidence of greed and lawlessness and lack of self-discipline. "Try the spirits whether they be of God."

All this sin can be forgiven and the power of it broken, if men will do as those shepherds did. They turned from whatever they were doing and sought Jesus in the Manger at Bethlehem. This Christmas we, too, can seek Jesus Christ in the "Bethlehem" of His Church. We can worship Him, as they did, and then we can pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." He can and will answer that prayer.

That would be the beginning of great things. God could use us to work for Him among men. His Power would grow within us and then through us He would change the spirit of our day. The day of miracles is not over and He can do much with honest men who will obey His orders. We could be His ambassadors in every situation. Thousands are already doing it. Why not you? When you prove that Christianity works in your own life, you know that it will work in the lives of others.

And what would be the result? "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." It is the only way; that is why Christ came. This Christmas Day He will come near to you. Are you going to stay out in the Field of Indifference? Or have you decided that He is going to rule in your life as King, to the glory of God and the good of your neighbours?

**T**WO thousand men and women of the Rhine Army, stationed in the Hamburg area, will take part in a special BFN Christmas Service which is to be relayed by the BBC on Christmas morning as BAOR's own message to their people at home.

Drawn from units of the Army, Navy and Air Force, the congregation will fill the Concert Hall of Broadcasting House, Hamburg, to join in a service for Christmas conducted by the Rev. Henry Davis. They will hear an address from the Deputy Chaplain-General, the Rev. Geoffrey Druitt.

The great organ of the Concert Hall, played by Captain Lionel Morse, RAOC, and the BFN Light Orchestra, conducted by Captain Trevor Harvey, will lead this congregation of Servicemen and women in the singing of the traditional Christmas hymns.

The BFN was asked by the BBC in London to make a contribution toward Christmas morning programmes, and this special service is their answer. It will be broadcast over the British Forces Network and the BBC Light Programme at 11.30 hours, and will take the place of the Hamburg Garrison Church Service which would otherwise have been held on Christmas morning.



Church of St. Nicholas, Charlwood, Surrey.

# from a CHURCH in SURREY

**W**HEN the announcers on Forces' radio stations throughout the world introduce the Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve services from their stations, it will be a nostalgic moment for many men from Britain.

For the services they will hear are typical of those they used to attend on these two festivals at their own churches at home and they have been recorded in a typical village church, with the simple devotion that is characteristic of England's village congregations.

The church in which the services were recorded is St. Nicholas, Charlwood, Surrey, which is the epitome of all English country churches.

## 900 Years old

The congregation is proud of the fact that the oldest part of the church dates back to 1080 and that its Norman arches are fine specimens of their kind.

It is proud of the two 13th-century windows, the 13th-century mural paintings, the fine screen, dating back to 1480, which still has its original gilt in excellent condition. It is proud of the Charlwood stone walls and the roofing of Horsham slab.

It is proud, too, of St. Nicholas' daughter-church, St. Michael and All Angels', over at Lowfield Heath, which was built a mere 125 years ago and now caters for some 1,300 of the parish 2,000 inhabitants.

Charlwood proper has changed little in the past

few centuries and St. Nicholas, which can accommodate 350 worshippers at one time, is adequate for the 700 parishioners who live near it.

The parishioners of Charlwood, if they ever stop to think about it, can be proud of their church's record in this war.

## On the Bomb Run

Though they were on the edge of Bomb Alley, they refused to disperse the congregation when the air raid sirens sounded, and uncounted times they carried on with their services while the Luftwaffe droned overhead and AA fire boomed in the distance.

St. Nicholas claims that it is one of the 11 churches out of the 336 in the Southwark diocese to be undamaged by the war. But there is a qualification to the claim.

"The west window was blown in by a flying bomb," the one-armed rector, the Rev. W. Grainger Thompson, told me, "but that old window was so shaky that a gale might have done it, so we didn't make any war damage claim."

Besides carrying on its normal good work, St. Nicholas ran a canteen for Service people in the area.

But its greatest source of war pride is in the number of young men and women it has sent to the Services and whose names are recorded on a Roll of Honour that is prominently displayed in the church.

When the Christmas and New Year's Eve services are broadcast from Forces' stations, they will link the church with many of its parishioners overseas.

## Sons of the Village

For example, it is hoped the broadcast may reach the four Hinton brothers, two of them in Italy and two in Germany. Also in Germany are young Charlie Gates, a gunner, Vivian Esch, an RASC subaltern, Lionel Gillespie, who is a corporal in the Royal Sussex Regiment, and Fred Mansbridge and Walter Edwards of the RASC.

There will be Trooper John Willis, who is in the Far East, Jim Young, a Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Navy, who is in the Middle East, and David Stovold, who is an officer in the Indian Army.

And Charlwood hopes that somehow Pilot-Officer Donald Charlwood, Royal Australian Air Force, will be able to listen. Donald came to England from "down under" and joined the RAF early in the war. He came down to the village which bears his name to tell them that his ancestors came from there. Charlwood "adopted" him; he spent his leaves at the Rectory and his name is on the Roll of Honour with those of the rest of the congregation who are in the services.

## Rector's First Broadcast

The men from Charlwood will hear the rector who christened some of them, and in whose choir some of them sang, send greetings from Britain to all Servicemen and women overseas, in his first broadcast.

They will understand the sincerity in his voice, because they will know that two days after the recording was made their rector received news that his second son, Major Patrick Thompson of the Sikhs, was safe after being a prisoner in Jap hands since Singapore fell; that his eldest son, a Wing-Commander in the RAF, faced the dangers of both Wingate's Burma expeditions and won the DSO and the MC; and that his third son, an agricultural officer in St. Helena, will be listening to the broadcast, too.

They will hear their relatives and friends singing in the choir and they will listen appreciatively to Mrs. Dorothy Jay playing the organ, remembering that she is the daughter of the late Tom Wiggins, who was a well-known local builder and a great village character.

And as their thoughts turn from the religious significance of the occasion to its traditional festivities, they will remember with longing the walk from the church door, along the side of the churchyard, to the oaken bar of the old Half-Moon Inn, where Charlwood will be drinking their health.

RICHARD ELLEY (Capt.)



# The Mistel Bough

TERROR CAME  
IN THE NIGHT  
TO TRÜBLÉN —  
WITH A RUSTLE  
AND CREAK.



ILLUSTRATIONS  
by  
G. E. HORNER (Lt.)

"It is right to say that  
we in Trüblén were  
afraid, afraid to think or  
speak of what might  
be happening . . ."

It is very kind of you, sir, to admire this mistletoe. It is indeed mistletoe, but much larger than any perhaps which you have seen before. In the cellar where I live, in the Hügelsstrasse, I have some which I have measured. The berries are three centimetres round and the leaves, the biggest of them, twelve or thirteen. *Es ist ja ohne Zweifel* — It is without doubt the largest mistletoe in the world. I do not wish to trade with you, sir, but perhaps if you had a cigarette . . . ?

I have this from Trüblén, which was once a fine little town, maybe two thousand people, with a market place, three good bierkellers and an inn: everything very compact around the Rathaus which was too big for us, but brought a few tourists because of some medieval wood carvings in the mayor's parlour. Lately — I mean just before the war — some of the Parteibonzen — the bosses — would visit the place in their great cars to see the house where Kurt Lansburger was born. Perhaps you have heard of him. He was of the Party, the SS you know, and I think not a very good man. Some dreadful things were said of him and it is best, no doubt, to hope he was mad, for he is dead, you know, and can trouble no one any more.

Trüblén was very pretty; stone and wood, with crazy red roofs like a fairy story illustration. Now it is gone, and when there is a map of Germany again it will not be marked.

But it was not the bombs nor the fighting which caused this matter; there were no soldiers there and no workshops. If the scientists and the professors had not been so busy at the war, it would have been a sensation and a wonder for nine days as well as a great mystery. But no one could be spared and so the Gestapo put a fence around the place with a great deal of barbed wire and a new road was built which does not take you near to the mystery. Now the Gestapo has gone and the wire is rotting and broken. But nobody goes through: travel with us is nearly impossible nowadays, as you know, and who would go two hundred kilos just to gaze at a mystery?

It may be that a few wandering people have trapped rabbits there, but the undergrowth is very thick, too thick to penetrate very far, and there are no roads any more. Nothing is there but trees and great briars which tear your clothes just as viciously as any barbed wire.

I know all this for a fact because I spent a day in the effort and failed. For my trouble I had a coat torn to ribbons — a bad thing for winter — some seeds and a few roots.

There was a time when I had a garden and could be interested in curiosities of this nature. Now I must content myself with a few cuttings which I can grow in the little patch of poor soil behind the cellar where I live.

It is two years now since it happened. We have seen so many terrible events since then that this affair seems less peculiar than it should, but this is not the way in Germany today.

Yet a great deal of it I saw for myself.

Even during the time of our victories Trüblén was not the easiest place to visit, but I was permitted to live there because of my mother, who was very old and bedridden.

You see, in the woods near the town there was a camp — a Konzentrationslager.

I do not defend this: that it was a bad place where wickedness was done every day I know from the talk of the guards, from what happened later, and most of all — *verstehen Sie* — from my heart, because I lived so near to something which I could only suspect.

We in Trüblén were uneasy about it, but in the war there was so much to trouble us. When the end came it was a matter for terror and not just for worry. Yet it started very quietly. It began with the weeds in the market place.

There was always, of course, a little grass and some moss perhaps between the cobblestones. We noticed the change first in the late summer of '43. What little weeds there were should have been brown and dried-up. It was long after the hay crop and before the goodness returns to the soil. Yet suddenly the weeds began to flourish.

I knew old Shönemann, the Bürgermeister, well enough to chaff him about it. I told him his market place was beginning to look like an Austrian railway station before the Anschluss. He did not laugh about it and the next day some SS men — not the town officials — came and sprayed the cobblestones with chemicals.

It made no difference. By the end of the week the weeds came back and so strongly that they forced several stones out of place.

That evening I saw Shönemann again. We were in the big bierkeller next to the Rathaus. He was sitting alone at his *stammtisch*, which was unlike him, and looked worried, which would be nearly humorous if you knew his big, smiling face.

"The weeds are back, I notice, Herr Bürgermeister," I said.

For a long time he did not answer me. Then he turned round and looked at me straight in the face, his head very close to mine. "My eyesight is poor in these days, my friend," he said, "and I find it pays me to notice as little as I can. But do you see anything wrong with that wall?"

The keller was below the ground and the walls were of stone and very thick.

A great crack spread from the floor to the ceiling, like a river traced on a map. In the centre, almost like a human arm, there crept a root, a very strong brown root with young, white shoots.

"It's the ivy from the creeper outside," I said. "It's growing too fiercely. Perhaps it should be cut."

"Yes," he said, "it is growing. But it was cut at ground level four days ago by the SS. Tell me, have you been along the road to the camp lately?"

Now no one, except the camp officials, ever went that way. The road led only into the woods and to the camp and the SS did not encourage visitors. They also kept very bad-tempered dogs which were apt to stray.

"You should walk a little that way, my friend," he said, "you'd see a lot to surprise you. I wish you goodnight."

With that he left me, and half his pot of beer, too, which was most unlike him.

I was just going across to join some friends when something happened. I do not forget this, for it was like the first real thundercrack of a storm.

A great piece of plaster from the ceiling came crashing down on to a table and filled the whole room with dust. At first every one was dumb-founded: then all the tongues began to wag together. "It's the bombing," said one — but there had been no bombing near us. "The earth beneath the foundations has moved," said another. And

a third cried, "It's the roots of the ivy creeper — they're dangerous."

Next to me was Gottlieb Gross, a shifty old devil, but friendly, in his oily way, with all the Gestapo and the officials. A piece of the plaster had hit his shoulder and covered his hat with fine rubble.

As he shook it and blew the powder off he turned to me and said, "I'm getting out of here — right away. Out of this town. If you take my advice you'll go too. I've seen things I don't like and this is the end for me. I'm going, if I have to walk as far as Göttingen."

We went up the stairs together. It was a fine, warm night with a big harvest moon as large as a ripe pumpkin.

"What have you seen?" I said. "Have you been down the road to the camp?"

He looked at me and nodded and winked. It was a trick of his, that wink — a nervous jerk he couldn't help — but it made him look confiding and sly.

"I've been right into the camp," he said. "I do a little business there now and again. I was there last night. And you mark my words. In a week's time there'll be no camp at all in Trüblén woods. They're frightened."

He began to giggle and I saw that he was not a little scared himself. "They're frightened," he repeated, "and they'll clear out. You mark my words. They'll go, and I'm going too."

"What's the matter with the camp?" I asked. "Plenty," he said. "You'll see — if you stay in Trüblén." With that he shambled off into the alley where he lived: I never saw him again.

The moonlight in the market square was very bright. At the corner I stumbled over a loose stone and paused a little to look round. There was no chink, of course, from any door or window. Nothing but the moon shining down on an empty market place. It was like a city of the dead, a city that has been dead a long time, with huge, rank weeds growing everywhere.

I walked home alone, twice alone, because my footsteps did not echo on the cobbles as they should have done: the moss and the grass made a carpet which absorbed even the noise of my wooden soles.

At the door of my mother's house I paused again because I thought I had been locked out. I banged and shouted and the old lady called out to me. When I put my shoulder to the wood — the latch was up — it moved unwillingly.

The virginia creeper had thrown a net of shoots over it and it needed strength to force it open.

Mutti, my mother you know, was very old, over eighty. For all that, she was sharp enough and with the aid of her maid Hilde she missed very little that passed in Trüblén. When she heard me enter the porch she called to me again.

"Come up, my son. It is late, but some events do not wait until the morning."

She was sitting up swathed in wool and old lace with two candles on either table beside her bed.

"What are they saying in the town?" she demanded, and she looked at me very straight over the two pairs of glasses she wore for reading.

"They say, or rather, Gottlieb Gross says, that they are quitting Trüblén-wald camp. I don't know why — he wouldn't tell me."

"I can tell you," said the old lady. "They're leaving the camp because they can't stay there any longer. The trees, the briars and the weeds have invaded the place and taken possession.

Every green thing is growing as if the soil had suddenly become as fertile as a jungle. They've tried everything and they can't stop it. The grass and the creepers have pulled down their huts. God himself knows what they've done to the soil, but it will take more than the Gestapo or the SS or Kurt Lansburger himself to put an end to it. You go to sleep now — if you can. When Hilde comes in the morning we'll speak of what's to be done."

On that she dismissed me. I slept very little, though I was tired enough, for the old house creaked and groaned as if all the winds in creation were tearing at it. But it was no storm which was grappling at the walls, but a green enemy, which was terrible because it was even less personal than a tempest.

It was a green dawn, too, when it came, for the light came dimly through my window, filtering through the creeper which nearly clogged it.

Hilde woke me. She looked more ill-tempered than usual and twice as fat, because, as I saw later, she was wearing nearly all the clothing she possessed.

"Get up," she said, "we're going. Wir haben schon die Nase voll. We must get the horse into the waggon and make a bed of sorts for the mistress. You will help me with her."

"Going, Hilde?" I said, and hardly dared to ask why.

"We're going," she said, "because if we don't we'll be eaten by the forest,

just like the camp was. In two days there'll be no Trüblén. Listen, old Shönemann, the Bürgermeister, has called a meeting for all able-bodied men — as if there were any in these days — to go out with him to fight the forest. But that's no good. With your limp you're useless, anyhow. Give me a hand with her, and quickly now."

I put on my clothes and went downstairs. She was right. The garden was a jungle. The flagstones in the hall were moving with grass bursting up between them.

In the cellar we kept a few valuables — most illegal, in those days, but one had to think for oneself — and I tried to retrieve them. But when I opened the door I saw it was useless. I descended a few steps and was forced back. The place was full of fungus — bigger than anything I've ever seen. Somehow that frightened me more than anything; it was so very malignant.

We boiled some water and got a little food together. Outside the sounds were not as they should have been. Instead of the rumble of the farm carts as they passed along the road there was a gentle rustling, like a loaded haywagon passing down a narrow country lane. But the carts were going by and all in one direction — away from Trüblén, away from the camp and the woods which were suddenly swallowing everything with their now angry growth.

Nowadays we have seen so many people carrying everything they possessed on a handcart, but this for me was new and frightening. Our neighbours' waggons were the same; I suppose, as any others, but long tentacles of creeper and weed clung to them and trailed in the grass as they

moved past our gate. The procession was doubly unnerving because it was so hushed, so carpeted.

Between us Hilde and I got the old horse hitched to the waggon and we spoke very little. I took a hedging knife and cut the cart clear of the wisteria which was twisting about it from the stable doors. We carried Mutti downstairs and lifted her into the bed we'd made for her.

"There's little enough worth taking with us," she said, "except the gold and my trinkets. You've got them safe?" "They're still in the cellar," I muttered, "I can't get into it because of the fungus."

"Take an axe, boy, and try again."

I went back, but it was useless. I splintered the cellar door — it opened inwards — but the stone stairs and the walls were clogged with the filthy yellow growths and the stench as I tried to hack at it made me sick. Even Hilde admitted it was impossible. It was like cutting at a wall of billowing, reeking indiarubber.

"When we've reached Cousin Wilhelm's place and have found somewhere to live, I'll come back," I promised. "By winter a lot of this will have died off and I'll take the waggon and collect all I can find."

The old lady looked round for the last time. "By winter," she said, "there'll be nothing left here. The weeds and the briars will have made Trüblén into a patch of rubble."

"It's a judgment on us. God knows what they've been doing in that camp of theirs. That's where it began."

We set off down the track which had been a tidy road only a few days before. At first it was difficult going, with Hilde leading the horse.

He was frightened too, and kicked and plunged like a colt. Once a huge wolfhound — from the camp, I suppose — passed us going like a mad

thing, and that set him rearing and tossing so that he nearly bolted with us. Only the undergrowth held him back.

The worst of the journey was over more quickly than I'd expected. Somehow one imagined that this revolt of green things was going on for ever and that the weeds would strangle every living thing in the countryside. But quite suddenly, at the crossroads, it stopped.

Behind us lay a jungle of briars, long grass and trees with their terrifying, unnatural burgeoning: ahead lay the good brown stubble waiting for the autumn ploughing, and the solid, civilised, metal road.

Mother was very ill all that winter and could not be left. They told me last Christmas that a great fence of wire had been put round Trüblén and that the road had been diverted, but I could not go back to find out what happened in the heart of it. In the spring the old lady died.

Things were bad for us here; it was months before I could make the trip. Then, when my chance came, I took a pruning hook and set off on my bicycle in search of the house and my little store of treasure.

It is a long ride from here, difficult for a cripple. I slept in ditches for two days

and was very hungry when I reached the edge of the wild. It was not easy to find, even knowing the country as I do, for a new road had been built. But when I came to the boundary it was well enough marked by the barbed wire fence and the "Verboten" notices.

I chose an entrance where the briars seemed thinner, but the way was very difficult. Everything still grew in profusion and much bigger than is normal — the leaves, the fruit, the thorns were twice their rightful size. Where there had been, as I thought, good pastures in the old days there were young larches and silver birch, with bracken as high as my head.

It was like cutting a path through a jungle where no road has ever been.

For a day I struggled and hacked at it. I passed bricks and stones and beams covered with lichen and moss where houses had once stood.

Then I gave up. I was frightened, I was hungry, I was dead with exhaustion and the thorns had torn my clothes and cut my skin cruelly. Moreover my track seemed to be healing up behind me.

Though I was so beaten with weariness that it seemed I must drop dead, I ran and plunged and struggled until I reached the wire again. Then I fell down for the last time that day, sobbing and sweating, and slept until my own shivering woke me at dawn.

I knew then that everything was lost, that I would never see my mother's gold pieces or her rings and brooches and antique necklaces again. But because I was once fond of gardens and these flowers were so big as to be a wonder for all gardeners, I took some roots and seeds and what cuttings I could without going back into that wild place.

This mistletoe which you see — *die Mistel*, we call it — is from there. I have also some blue roses and some wild strawberries, honeysuckle, holly — even a young cherry tree. They will make the wisecracks open their eyes when the time comes.

What the explanation may be for this strange happening I cannot say. My few old friends, who were my neighbours in Trüblén and who came this way, still talk of it, of course.

There are many theories. We can gossip freely now and there is little else one can do. It certainly began at the Konzentrationslager and some speak of the unnatural fertilisation of the soil at that place. But before the old lady, my mother, died she had some strange fancies, more terrible, I think, than these others.

She said that it was life itself which had revolted at what happened in the camp. She said that when Man did something that degraded him below the lowest spawning thing, then all the other teeming forms of growth on earth rose up and blotted him out, as if he had not been. Perhaps she was near the truth there. Certainly one sees something of the sort in little even among these bomb ruins.

This mistletoe interests you? It is of course an English fantasy connected with your Druids and your days of paganism, but still tied to the Christmas festival. You may have it if you so desire — it grows freely enough on the apple tree in the yard by my cellar.

Thank you, sir, thank you. It was not my desire to trade with you, but I know your customs and superstitions at this season.

It is very kind of you, sir. Very kind indeed.

P. YOUNGMAN CARTER (Lt. Col.)



# A SPORTING YULE LOG

**A** LONG at bomb-damaged High-bury the other day, where the only sign of football is in George Allison's office now that the Arsenal team are forced to play all their home games at nearby Tottenham, we brought up the question of Christmas.

"Christmas! Don't talk to me about Christmas!" snapped roly-poly George Allison. "It is one big headache."

Well, you could have knocked this writer down with a transfer form. Here was the Arsenal chief, good almost any day for a joke, a laugh, and the things which go to make Christmas what it is, like a carbon copy of old Scrooge. It just didn't make sense—not until he began to explain.

You see, Arsenal's Christmas isn't set to be a round of roaring bonhomie this year. Why? Because the team will be a lot too busy about the business of making other people happy.

## Breathless Scramble

"Look at our fixtures," said the Soccer chief. "We are due at Newport to play the County on Christmas Day. You know what that means. We shall travel down on Christmas Eve, be off to bed early—and probably kept awake by carol singers and the town 'bloodes' at closing time—and up early for a leg-loosening walk."

"And that's not all. You can't play League football on a diet of turkey and plum pudding, so the boys will have a light lunch of egg. It will probably be powdered egg, at that. Then comes the game with the County."

What follows? Let me tell you. Arsenal have to hustle back to London on Christmas Night, get in some more sleep, and then turn out for the second game with the Welshmen.

"It isn't funny, you know," said George Allison. "By the time all this has happened there'll be precious little Christmas fare left for the lads. No, you can keep the holiday season so far as the professional footballer is concerned."

All that sounds somewhat depressing, but, happily enough, most of our sports performers are more fortunately placed. Christmas gives them a long lay-off. They've nothing to do except sit around, swap stories, and eat (and possibly drink) just what they please—or, more

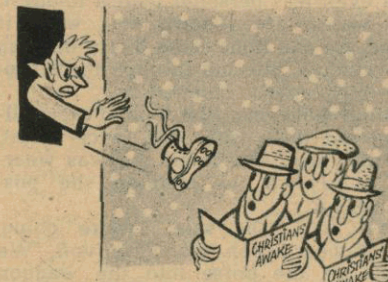
precisely, what they can get in these rationed times.

Away back in more spacious days, it was often the custom for a few of the boys to call at the Irwin home—stead for a glass of this and that and a natter by the fireside. The war put all that out of business in a big way, and cannot come back into circulation with Release Group 25 still around the corner.

Still, your correspondent decided to have the party all the same—right here in print. To this end, I have travelled the sportsways in search of Christmas stories from the stars.

Let's imagine, therefore, that we are all snugly positioned by the fire and that dapper Joe Davis, the world's snooker champion, is there, glass in hand, to open the session. Listen to him.

"You know that Christmas is an off-



Kept awake by carol singers.

duty time for me," says Joe. "Nobody wants to see any of us professionals when they can get in a hundred up or a bit of snooker on the quarter-size table which father drags out from its place under the stairs."

"Well, that let's me out. I usually go off to a quiet hotel in the country, forget all about pots and cannons, and take it easy. It was that way some years ago. I was enjoying the change when, on Boxing Morning, I happened to stroll through the billiards room of the place at which I was staying.

## No False Modesty

"Only the marker was there. Spotting me, he said, 'Excuse me, sir, but would you like a frame or two of snooker? I'll give you three blacks start.'"

"I told him that I wasn't really interested, and, anyway, I didn't think he could give me three blacks. 'You see, I happen to be Joe Davis.'"

"He looked up quite seriously and replied instantly: 'What, Joe Davis the world's champion? That's different, sir. I'll play you level.' And, you know, I really think he meant it."

How's that one? I say it demands an encore, which sets the Emperor of Pot off again to retail the yarn which was once told him by the late Tom Newman, probably the greatest raconteur ever in the world of billiards.

It seems that two commercial travellers met one day in a drab, dejected village, miles from anywhere. They had a couple of hours to wait for the one train of the day and went along to the local "pub" to ask the landlord if he could fix them up with a game of billiards just to pass away the time.

Yes, he could, although he warned them that the table wasn't too good. They found he was a truthful man. Away up in an upstairs room, smelling of damp and decay, they played billiards on a battered, beer-stained table with warped cues and chipped and yellowing ivory balls. Still, it was better than nothing.

The time passed quicker than they thought. Suddenly, they heard the whistle of the train as it clanked into the little station. Throwing down the

cues, they grabbed their bags and made a dash for it.

A year passed, almost to the day, and those travellers found themselves again making their annual call at the village. Again they had two hours to wait for the train. And again they went to the landlord of the inn to ask if they could use his billiards table.

"No you can't," he said. "You're too careless. I went up to the billiards room yesterday and what did I find? Why, you left the light on."

## Out Came the Ladies

So much for Joe Davis. Now comes Sydney Hulls, Europe's best-known boxing promoter in pre-war days, to tell a typical story of his father, the late and great J. T. Hulls—sports writer, fight referee, promoter, and Cockney wit.

"It was the first Christmas Eve of the 1914-18 war," muses Sydney as he looks through the blue haze of cigar smoke, and down the years. "Father was taking a party of boxers to King's Lynn for, of all things, a Boxing Day show."

"Well, you don't need telling what Liverpool Street station is like on that night. Every compartment of the East Anglian train was crammed to the eyebrows and there wasn't room in which to cram Jimmy Wilde, let alone a couple of heavy-weights."

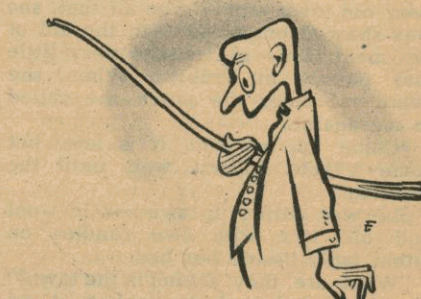
"But the old man didn't bat an eyelid. He picked out a carriage full of women and then called for me. 'Young Syd,' says he, 'just nip along and get the ferrets. Put 'em under the seat facing the engine, then get the rats and see they fit snugly under the seat the other side. And be careful. The sacks aren't too safe—goodness knows what'll happen if they all bite their way through and get to fighting on the journey.'"

"That did it. As father gave his orders, the carriage began to empty. Out got the ladies, in got the boxers. We had the place to ourselves—it was dead easy."

Another encore? Very well. Here's Syd Hulls again to tell of the time he promised Tommy Farr a swaggy leather golf bag if he could beat Ben Foord for the British and Empire heavy-weight title. The Tonypandy Terrier did the job.

"Now, I'll buy you a set of matched steel clubs to go in it if you can lick Maxie Baer," was the promoter's promise. Off went Tommy to win on points. Next thing, he was around at the Hulls office in Shaftesbury Avenue to pick up bag and clubs.

Very carefully he inspected them. Yes, it was a grand bag, look you. And the clubs—good enough for Bobbie Jones, man. Then, putting a hand like



... played with a warped cue.

a York ham into the side pocket, Tommy fished around anxiously.

Finally, he looked up with a rueful grin and said, "But I can't play golf. You haven't bought any balls!"

Now that's a joke against the Welsh wallop, but I come quickly to his defence with the explanation that he has

by  
**Paul Irwin**  
(Sit)



a knack of turning the laugh on himself in this manner. Like the Aberdonians, Tommy tries desperately to hide a soft heart under a shrewd exterior.

He is the most misunderstood man in sport. This I know better than the average boxing fan, inclined to judge a fighter by his newspaper cuttings. For proof, I give a yarn on my own account of the way Tommy came back from the States, the first battler ever to go 15 rounds with Joe Louis, and played Santa Claus to the kids of his native Tonypandy.

What that cost him is nobody's business but Farr's, and he's not telling. All I do know is that he arranged the show because, back of his mind, were memories of his early days in the Welsh mining town. There was never very much in the stockings of the Farr family, except, maybe, a few holes.

## Thumbnail Ghost Story

But let's get back to our sportraits by the fire. Next on the list is Patsy Hendren, who can grab you by the ears and keep you that way all night with his rich, rollicking anecdotes of cricket and cricketers.

For example, there's the former England batsman's gem of the sad-looking fellow he met in the train while travelling to an Old Trafford Test. He sat there quietly in his corner, deathly pale, with his overcoat buttoned up to the neck.

Patsy was concerned. "Are you feeling ill?" he inquired. The man ignored the question to put one on his own account.

"Do you play cricket?" he asked. Patsy said he did. "Then have you ever missed a catch in a big game?" came the next question. Again Patsy said that he had done exactly that.

"But have you ever missed six catches in a big game?" persisted the Sad Man. Patsy said he hadn't and added: "But if I did, I would cut my throat."

Here, the forlorn traveller unbuttoned his overcoat and pointed dramatically to his Adam's apple. "Well, what do you think I did?" he moaned.

Perhaps that one isn't a Christmas story, but it is right in the tradition of the yarn-spinning at this imaginary fire-side party of mine. In any case, I quickly conjure up Charles Burgess Fry, the incomparable "C.B." of famous memory, who played for England at both cricket and Soccer, broke the world's long jump record, and came as near as a touch to an international Rugby cap.

It appears that he was footing it for the Corinthians on a Christmas tour soon after he set his jump figure at 23 ft 6½ ins. His partner at full-back was F. R. Pelly, an 18-stoner with shoulders to match his poundage.

"Yon laddie has jumped 23 feet," said a Scot in the crowd, pointing in the general direction of Fry and Pelly. A fellow-Scot became interested. "Hey,



## SAM BARTRAM

He hadn't seen the ball for half-an-hour, or a single player.

a bonny height," says he. "He must ha made a hole when he came doon." Quite obviously, as Charles Fry has put on record, that spectator believed nobody but the gigantic Pelly could do such a thing.

## Visibility Nil

Or there's the Soccer story from Sam Bartram, flame-headed Charlton Athletic and England goalkeeper. Playing at the Valley one very foggy Christmas Day, he couldn't see more than a few yards in front of him.

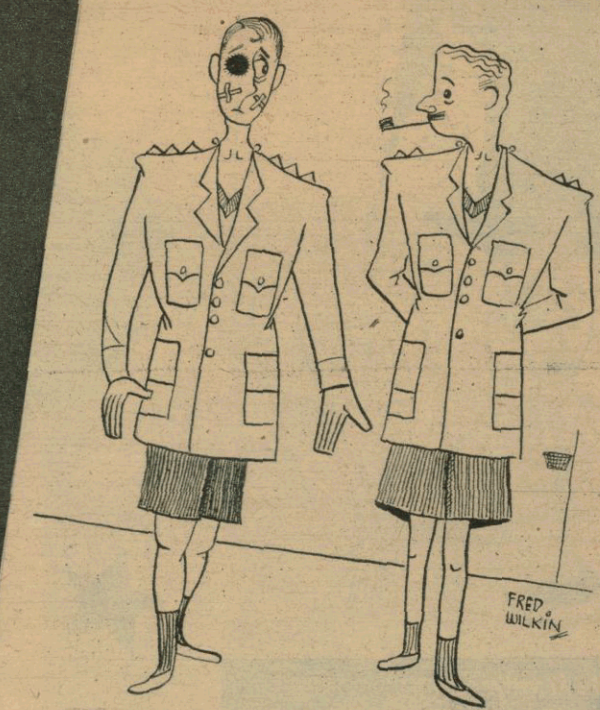
He gained the idea that Charlton were doing a lot of pressing, since he hadn't seen the ball for nearly half-an-hour, nor had the sight of a single player—clubmate or opponent. Samivel decided to investigate. He went upfield, only to discover not one man was there.

Then, and only then, did Bartram realise that the game had been abandoned half-an-hour earlier by the referee. When he did grope his way to the dressing-room, all the other boys were dressed and ready to leave the ground.

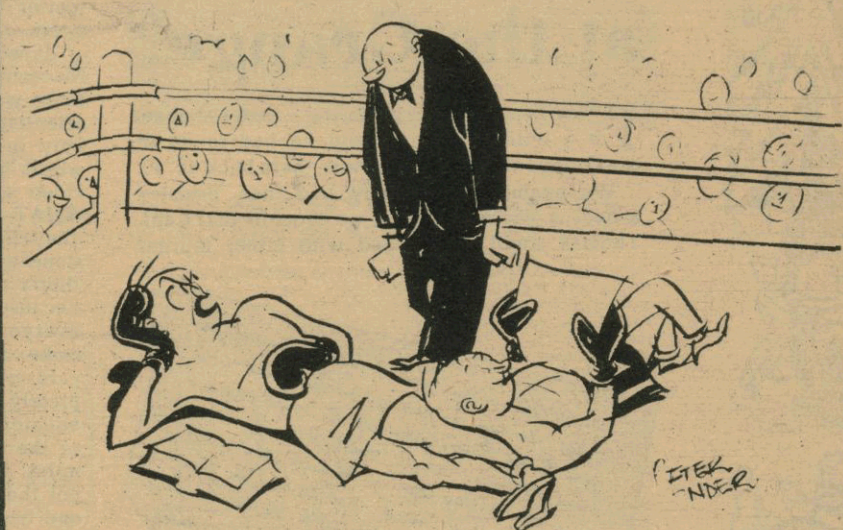
So it goes. The firelight flickers and dies. There is only the click of the coals as they grow cold. Another parade of Christmas memories over ... But there's always next year, praise be.



Samivel decided to investigate.



"It happens every time I play the Gunners at basketball!"



"We want shorter hours, softer gloves, and a bigger percentage of the purse money."



"But Mr. Dipple — we distinctly heard you say you could do it better yourself!"



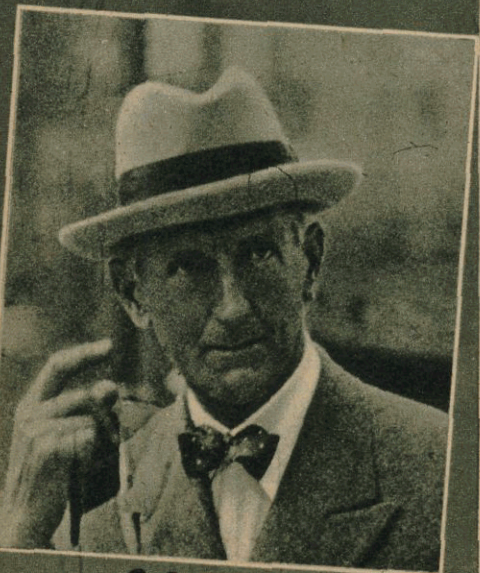
**GEORGE ALLISON**  
"Don't talk to me about Christmas!" he snapped.



**JOE DAVIS**  
"Nobody wants to see us professionals at this time."



**SYDNEY HULLS**  
"It was the first Christmas Eve of the 1914-18 war ..."



**C. B. FRY**  
His long jump record led to a misunderstanding.



## PATSY HENDREN

Tells an eerie story of a casual acquaintance who had missed six catches in a big game.





"I made it with spam!"



## No Murder at the Grange?

IT was Brinsley who produced a tattered sheet of a letter which he said he had found in the Grange when the unit was there back in '40.

We examined it closely and then Brinsley asked us whether, in fact, we thought that Capt. Thomas could be charged with either murder

*Captain Thomas and Colonel Brooks were out for a day's shooting, the past October but found little sport. Indeed Thomas lost his temper and was heard to make certain threats. Suddenly a shot rang out as they returned through the wood and Thomas discovered that he had in fact shot Brooks. Thomas himself insisted it had been quite deliberate. Now the curious thing about the whole affair is quite clearly that despite*

or manslaughter. We said that it was impossible to decide from the facts as shown in the letter, but Brinsley assured us that in fact Capt. Thomas had committed no crime. We asked "How come?" and he said that was his problem! Can you spot why Capt. Thomas should be congratulated rather than otherwise on his performance?

### Smudger's Matches

Smudger had managed to borrow a box of matches, always in short supply with him, and he arranged 16 of them like this—



He explained that we were allowed to change the position of two matches only, which must be put back in the picture somewhere, but as a result we must have only four squares instead of the present five. In answer to a dozen questions he explained that each square must be of the same size as the present ones, there must be no odd matches sticking out at corners, there must be no two matches lying together to make up any side... and so on. It took 12 minutes before McGinty did it, and then it was because he'd remembered it. Everyone voted it a real match problem without any catch at all.

# FUN AND GAMES



## Problems after Pudding

### The Atomic Problem

IT started in the mess just as half of us were dozing away as a direct result of the Christmas dinner. And Macartney was the cause of it. The first most of us knew was when Haworth started to raise his voice in a terrific argument, and before we could all get the matter clear Macartney had to start all over again.

"It was after the atomic bomb dropped," said Macartney with a grin which plainly showed there wasn't a word of truth in the story. "The scientists decided that the explosion had probably gone a good way towards splitting the world in two, so to obviate the risk they decided to put a metal band round the earth.

THAT was a bit of a problem, but they figured out how it could be done and they finally did it. You didn't read about it in the papers, because they didn't want to scare everyone, but they managed to make a steel band, about fifty yards wide, which would go completely round the world at the equator. Since the circumference of the world there is about 25,000 miles, it was some band, but they got the job done. Unluckily, someone had miscalculated. They made that band just six yards too long. Now six yards isn't much in 25,000 miles, but it stopped the band fitting tightly. Instead of gripping closely, it stood off from the earth a little way all round. The problem is, can you give a rough estimate of the gap between the earth and the metal band caused by its being six yards too long in its 25,000 miles? What was the gap? A millionth of an inch, a thousandth, an inch, a yard or two, or half a mile?" When Macartney gave his answer, it caused even more argument, but he was quite right as a few calculations soon showed.

### Buntwiddle Derby

Haworth then chipped in with a weird story about a millionaire who had two sons who were mad about car racing. The old man was convinced that sooner or later they'd kill themselves if they kept up the craze for speed, and in his will he proposed they should hold a race, each son to drive his favourite car from Buntwiddle to Banting. But just to cure the speed-itch his fortune, some twenty million pounds 3s. 4½d., should go to the son whose car got there last!

The race began — they'd each picked their worst car for the attempt. At the end of the first day's run the two cars were dead level, some 304 yards from Buntwiddle Cross with 50 miles left to go. The brothers stayed for the night at the Buntwiddle Arms, and it was there the fun started. They heard of a man staying there who wrote horoscopes and each promptly tried, on the sly, to get a word with

him. While he refused to search the stars for them, he gave to each the same advice.

Next morning, the two brothers jumped into the cars. With a great flurry of activity the two ancient models flashed along the Banting road at some eight or nine miles an hour. Ultimately one car got there first, and one brother lost the fortune and one won it. The problem is.... what was the advice which the astrologer gave them?

### World's Shortest Problem

Miser McDough left £624 to be divided equally between his children. How much did they each get?

### Who Wrote Them?

It can now be revealed that the new US Chief of Staff, General Eisenhower, was in fact also the author of Shakespeare's plays. These were not written by Bacon as some have hitherto assumed. The proof can be found by taking the titles of ten of the great dramatist's plays or poems and taking the second letter of each. Can you spot the plays? This, of course, completely overrides the old suggestion that they were written by George Bernard Shaw, which had been proved in a similar manner by taking the second letter of the following plays:  
A S Y O U L I K E I T  
T H E T E M P E S T  
H A M L E T  
A W I N T E R S T A L E

### Nine Little Niggers

THE curious thing about a word like PLEASES is that you can drop a letter at a time, like the ten little nigger boys, and in each case leave a good word right down to the last letter for instance...

PLEASES PLEASE PLEASE PLEA PEA PA A

No reshuffling of letters is allowed at any stage. Can you find a word of nine letters meaning gay or volatile with which you can do exactly the same thing? To give you a clue, one of the stages you will reach is the name of a letter of the Greek alphabet, but sounds like the sweet mother used to make.

### Word Square

Words run across and down.

Definitions:

- 1 Underground hollows
- 2 Place of combat
- 3 Willing to be bought
- 4 Decree
- 5 Compounds of basic and acid radicals.

	1	2	3	4	5
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Solutions on Page 26



# How Much Do You Know?

## QUIZ

(1) Let's have a simple start, shall we? Who was the first President of the United States of America?

(2) Admiral Bligh of the Bounty was, of course, Bill Bligh; Jack Bligh; Ted Bligh; Which?

(3) In which of the following years did Gracie Fields make her first London appearance? 1915; 1925; 1935?

(4) This wartime cartoon character was made famous by Strube; Giles; Jon; Strager; Sjt. Baker. Which? And what is his name?

(5) Ever heard of the Blue Ribbon Army? Who were they?

(6) Bolsheviki, the name given first to the followers of Lenin, means which of the following?

(a) Wild men with red hair; (b) Men who desire a social reform; (c) Men who are in the majority.

(7) You've all read sea stories — then tell us what is a binnacle?

(8) "Bawtry" is which of the following? (a) Illegal dispossession of goods; (b) A town in Yorkshire; (c) The art of under-painting.

(9) According to the table of measures, three barleycorns make: one peck; one inch; one wey. Which?

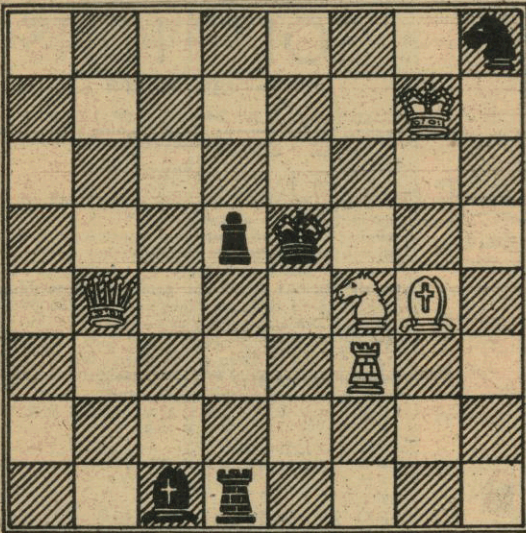
(10) Only one of these statements is true — which? (a) Stalagmites grow downwards and stalactites grow upwards; (b) Crocodiles lay eggs; (c) In Texas a wife can be divorced for eating biscuits in bed; (d) Browning wrote "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

(11) The Bank of England was founded, you remember, in the year 1413; 1694; 1782; 1865. Which?

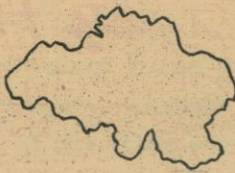
(12) We all know that the dodo is extinct, but can you say which of the following statements is true? (a) The dodo had webbed feet; (b) The dodo had a curved bill; (c) The dodo never existed.

## CHESS

White to move and mate in two.



Solution on Page 26



(13) Here is the outline of a European country which most of you have visited. Recognise it?

(14) If you have stomach aches, you are dyspeptic. If you never have a stomach ache you are — what?

Solutions on Page 26

## Gen

If you're going to kiss under the mistletoe you might at least do it the correct way.

What do you mean? A kiss is a kiss wherever you do it.

That isn't the point. Kissing under the mistletoe is an English custom dating back to the 17th century. The correct procedure, as laid down in the original ritual, is that after each kiss the man shall pluck a berry from the mistletoe. When all the berries have gone from that particular twig, the lovers must look elsewhere for their kissing.

Referring to St. Nicholas, or, if you prefer it, Father Christmas. He is frequently known as Santa Claus, which is the German name for St. Nicholas.

Wrong.

I beg your pardon?

The name Santa Claus comes from America where it started as a corruption of the Dutch San Nicolaas, taken over there by the early Dutch settlers. The Germans had no share in the origin of Santa Claus: he was a mystic from Asia Minor, who later became patron saint of Russia.

Thank you very much.

## LEAVE CIGARETTES

Many readers have queried the previous answers given in our correspondence columns on the subject of cigarettes for men on UK leave. The following is the correct position.

Personnel proceeding on privilege leave may purchase two weeks' issue of NAAFI cigarettes, but, owing to the fact that they are struck off the strength of their unit while on leave, they are not issued with 50 free cigarettes in transit, either going to, or returning from, leave.

NAAFI staffs on the Dover-London train sell cigarettes which are not bought by NAAFI at privilege prices, but which are additional purchases from firms, over and above the normal Forces' allocation allowed by Imperial Tobacco Company.

No Christmas decorations would be complete without a Christmas tree. Now a Christmas tree owes its origin to ... to ...

Well?

I'm not sure. What is the origin of the Christmas tree?

The custom of Christmas trees comes from Germany, whence it is a direct descendant of the Scandinavian Yggdrasil or World Tree. Norse mythology states that this tree, which is an ash, binds together with its roots and branches heaven, earth and hell. It is also supposed to be the fountain of all wonderful virtues. Hanging presents on the branches of Christmas trees has a later origin, dating back to the time when pilgrims, before setting out on a journey, used to hang votive offerings on the branches of trees that the saints might protect them on their travels. This custom has endured to this day in some of the more obscure parts of Southern Germany and Austria.

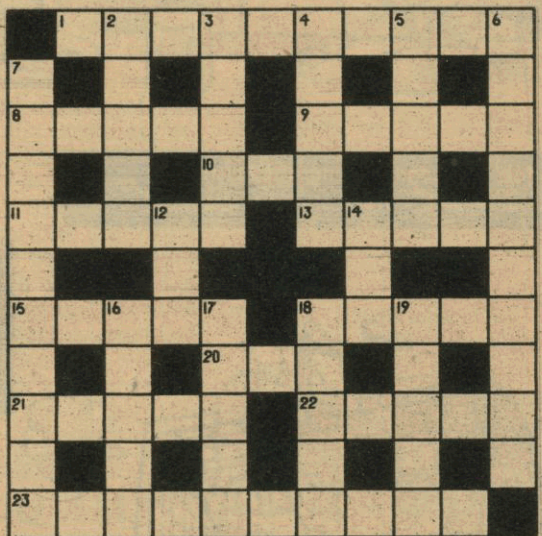


"This will be Foster — back on leave from a Fog Dispersion Unit"

## CROSSWORD

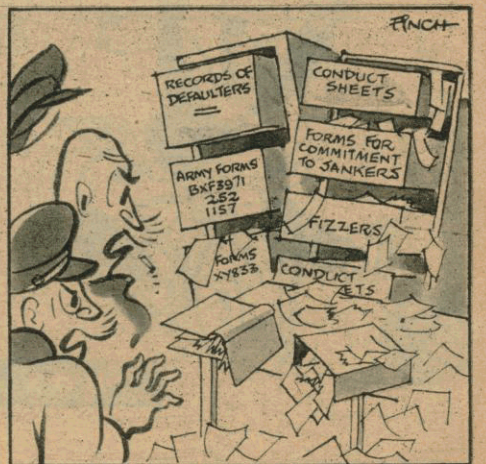
CLUES ACROSS: 1. These Guards should not find themselves in hot water. — 8. Familiar to thousands of troops if shot at the back. — 9. I find myself in the river in the French Air Force. — 10. Indicative of a double decoration. — 11. Hardly descriptive of the modern Cavalry. — 13. You'll need a chit to get this bone. — 15. Possibly human Biblical character. — 18. Runs before the wind. — 20. The law is changed here. — 21. O, a gun might give us some fertiliser. — 22. Release of Unit "E". — 23. One of the "Foresters'" counties.

CLUES DOWN: 2. Or colour up in command. — 3. The other of the "Foresters'" counties. — 4. Triple crown (but no anchor!). — 5. It's part of the victory. — 6. Its regimental badge is the fleur-de-lis. — 7. Vickers or Browning, for example. — 12. Proverbially of little worth in Paris, say. — 14. Where in young soldiers have to wear an "L" sign? — 16. The middle part of the Artillery. — 17. You'll find one member of the family or another amongst the "Kiwis", perhaps. — 18. How grenades may be despatched. — 19. Blue marine?



Solutions on Page 26

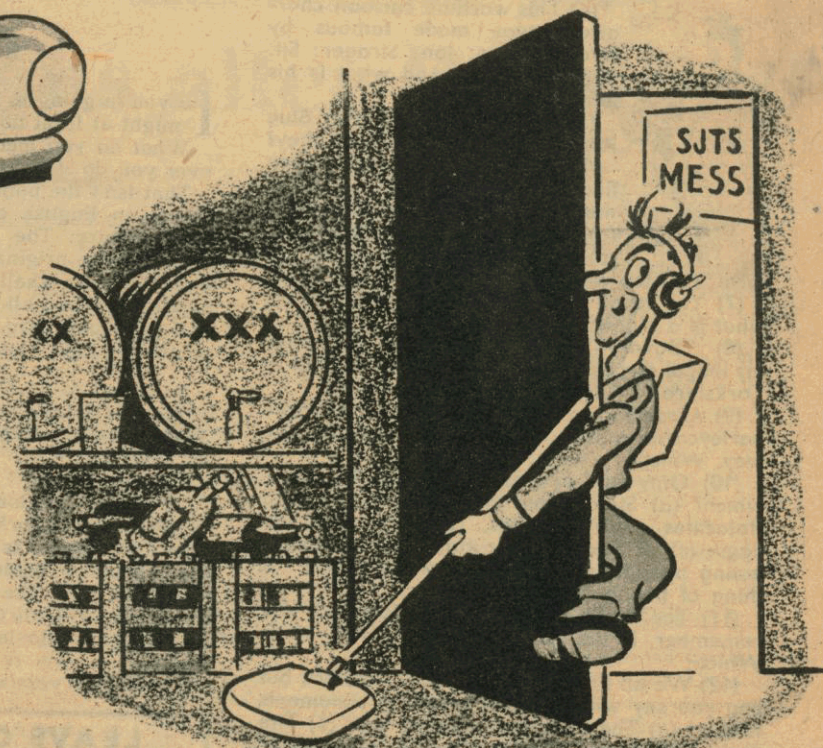
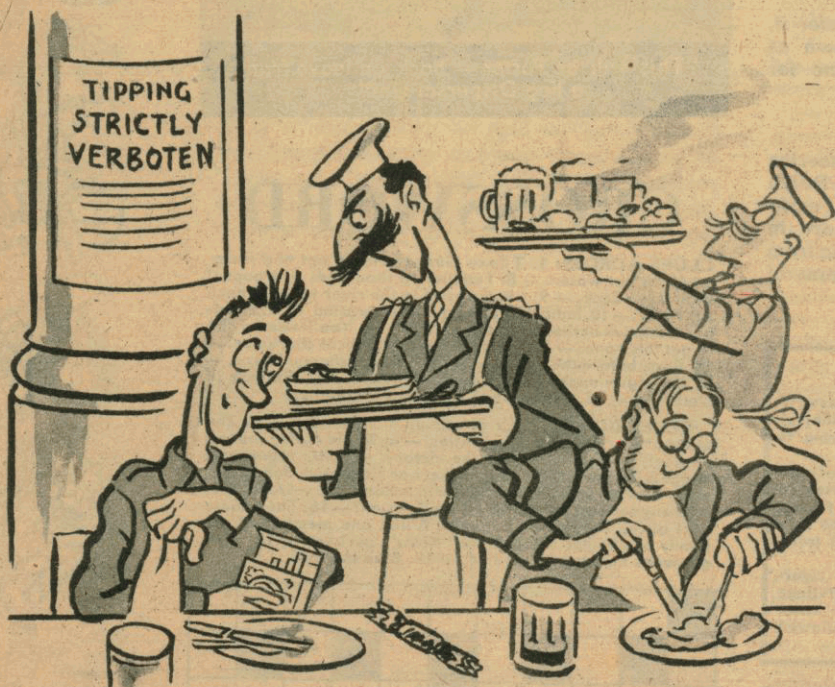
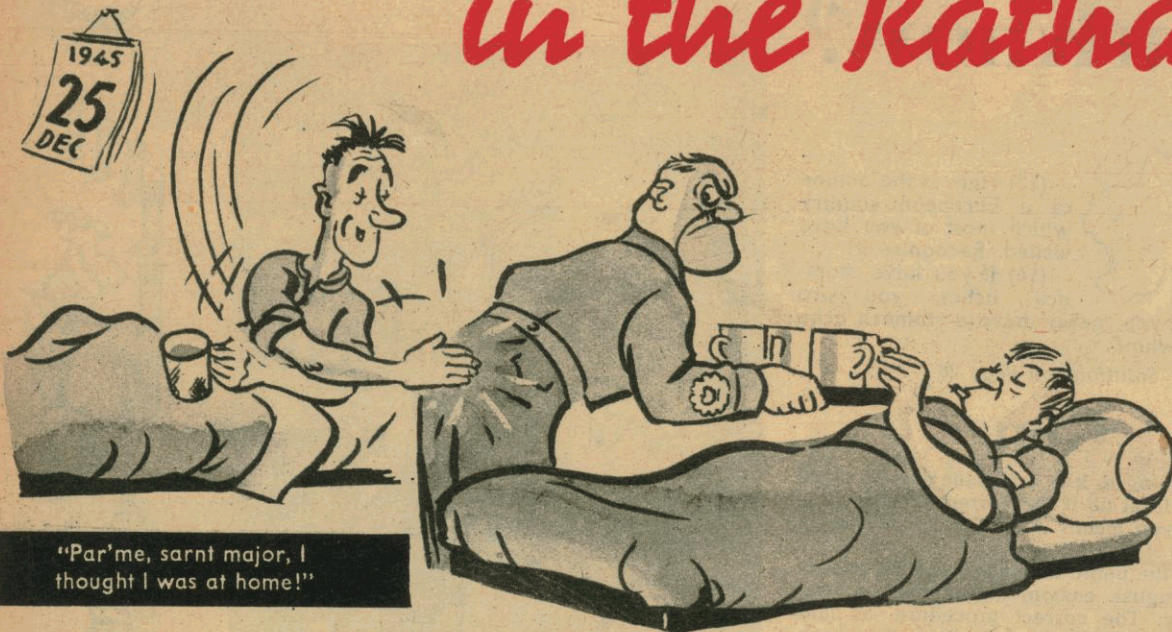
## KID OGO...





# Smudger's Christmas Day in the Rathaus

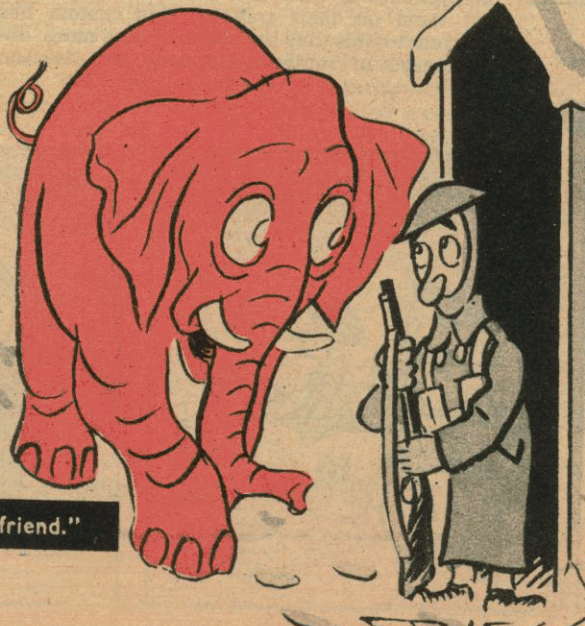
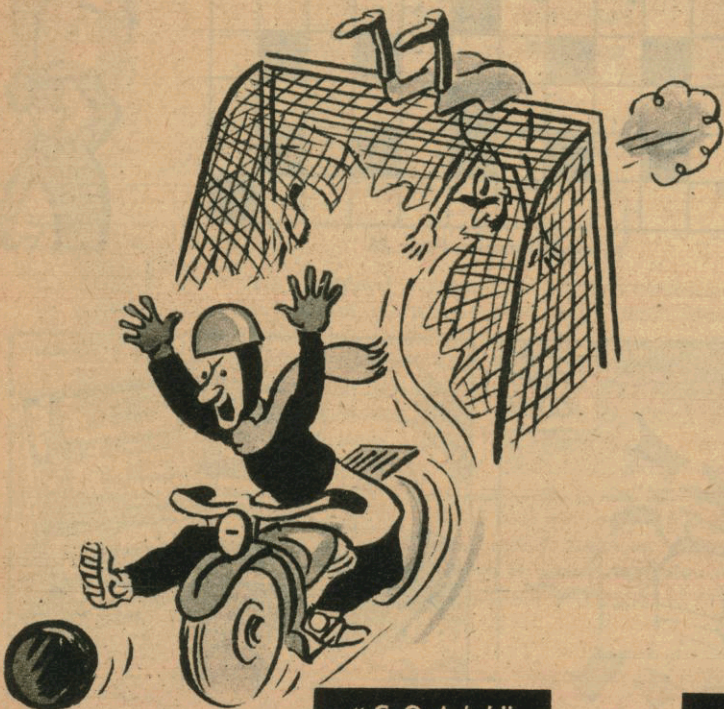
by Friell



"WOT, no mines?"



"12,000 ATS in BAOR — and I get you twice in one Paul Jones!"



## SOLUTIONS

(from Pages 24 and 25)

No Murder at the Grange: There is no crime involved in shooting 13 rooks as Captain Thomas did. Smudger's Matches:



Atomic Problem: The band would stand off the earth a distance of one yard. This is true of any similar case, the additional circumference being divided by 2π to find the additional radius.

Buntwiddle Derby: Since the money was to go to the son whose CAR got there last, the astrologer suggested to each that they jump in the other's car and drive as quickly as possible.

World's Shortest Problem: £312 each. There can only be two children if "between" is used; with more it would have to read "amongst".

New facts about the Chief of Staff:  
MERRYWIVES OF WINDSOR  
TIMON OF ATHENS  
AS YOU LIKE IT  
VENUS AND ADONIS  
ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA  
THE TEMPEST  
ROMEO AND JULIET  
A WINTER'S TALE  
PERICLES  
TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Nine Little Niggers: SPARKLING  
SPARKING  
SPARING  
SPRING  
SPRIG  
PRIG  
PIG  
PI  
I

Word Square: CAVES  
ARENA  
VENAL  
ENACT  
SALTS

### SOLUTIONS TO QUIZ:

1. George Washington. 2. Bill Bligh. 3. 1915.  
4. Sgt. Baker's character is "Sad Sack" appearing in "Yank". 5. Society of Total Abstinents, founded in 1878. 6. Men of the majority. 7. The box in which is kept the nautical compass. 8. Yorkshire town. 9. One inch. 10. Crocodiles lay eggs. 11. 1694. 12. Curved bill. 13. Belgium. 14. Eupptic.

### CHESS

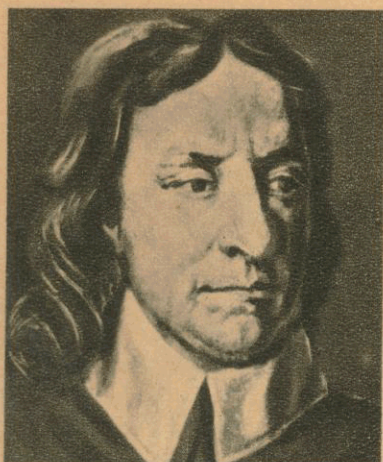
Key-move: R-Q3.

### CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS: — 1. Coldstream. 8. Alder (shot). 9. Av-i-on. 10. Bar. 11. Horsy. 13. Aitch. 15. Nahum. 18. Scuds. 20. Awl. 21. Guano. 22. Untie. 23. Nottingham.

DOWN: — 2. Or-der. 3. Derby. 4. Tiara. 5. Evict. 6. Manchester. 7. Machine-gun. 12. Sou. 14. I.T.C. 16. Heart. 17. Ma-or-i. 18. Shung. 19. Ultra (marine).





# OLIVER CROMWELL KEEP THE PEACE

From the speech to the Second Protectorate Parliament, 1658.

WE have had now six years of Peace — we have had four score years of Peace — and have had an interruption of ten years war. We have seen and heard and felt the evils of it, and now God hath given us a new taste of the comfort and benefit of Peace. Have you not had such a Peace in England, Ireland and Scotland, that there is not a man to lift up his finger to put you into distemper? Is not this a mighty blessing from the Lord of Heaven? Shall we now be prodigal of time? Should any man, shall we, listen to delusions, to break and interrupt the Peace? There is not any man that hath been true to this cause, as I believe you have been all, that can look for anything but the greatest rending and persecution that ever was in the world! I wonder, then, how it can enter into the heart of any man to undervalue these things; to slight peace and the Gospel, the greatest mercies of God. We have Peace and the Gospel! Let us have one heart, one soul, one mind to maintain the honest and just rights of this Nation...

# THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON OPERATION "BUTCHER" — 1810

Adjutant General's Office  
Cartasco, 23 December 1810.

(1) The Commander of the Forces has frequently been obliged to request the officers of the Army

would not shoot the deer in the Royal or other parks, without having leave to do so; but he is concerned to learn that the practice still continues in a great degree, in the Duchess de la Foën's park, near the cantonments of the Army.

(2) The Commander of the Forces will avoid to name the regiments, by the officers of which this has been done; but he requests those officers to reflect, that their continuing to shoot the deer in these parks, is not only a breach of military discipline, but shews an entire forgetfulness of the rights of property, which they would be obliged to respect in their own country, and which they ought to respect in these, where every individual of the British Army has been so well treated.

(3) The Commander of the Forces is not desirous of preventing the officers of the Army from amusing themselves, in any manner they may think proper, or which may be consistent with their duty, but he requests them to respect the parks and preserves of the Prince, and other inhabitants."

# QUEEN VICTORIA CRIMEA STAR?

General Alter-Order —  
24 December 1854. Crimea.

THE Commander of the Forces has the greatest satisfaction in publishing to the Army two despatches from the Minister of War, the one expressing the Queen's entire approbation of the conduct of the Troops at the Battle of Inkerman, the other signifying her Majesty's gracious intention of conferring a medal upon all the officers

# They Spoke At Christmas...

These voices come to us from the past, but they have a strangely similar accent — or is it so strange, in view of the deep roots of the British character? — to those we are hearing in this present season.



Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig



Wellington's men celebrate Yuletide

and soldiers of the Army who have been engaged in the arduous and brilliant campaign in the Crimea.

The Commander of the Forces congratulates the Army on receiving so distinguished a mark of Her Majesty's favour and high appreciation of their gallant exertions and he deems it his duty at the same time to draw the particular attention of all to the following passage in the Duke of Newcastle's despatch of the 27th instant. "Let not any Private Soldier in the ranks believe that his conduct is unheeded — the Queen thanks him — his country honours him."

# HAIG TO HIS SOLDIERS

Special Order of the Day

By Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig,  
KG, GCB, GCVO, KCIE,  
Commander-in-Chief,  
British Armies in France.

THIS Christmas Day sees our united efforts crowned with a glorious victory.

I desire to wish all ranks of the Armies under my command a very happy Christmas and a brighter and happier New Year.

The self-sacrifice, endurance and devotion to duty of our troops have gained the admiration of the whole world, and at this time, when everything is being done to accelerate demobilisation, I feel sure that the same splendid qualities, which have carried us through these past years of war, will help us and strengthen us in reconstructing our Empire.

My thoughts are with you all on this memorable Christmas Day, and I wish you God Speed.

D. Haig, F.-M.  
Commander-in-Chief  
British Armies in France.

General Headquarters,  
23 December 1918.

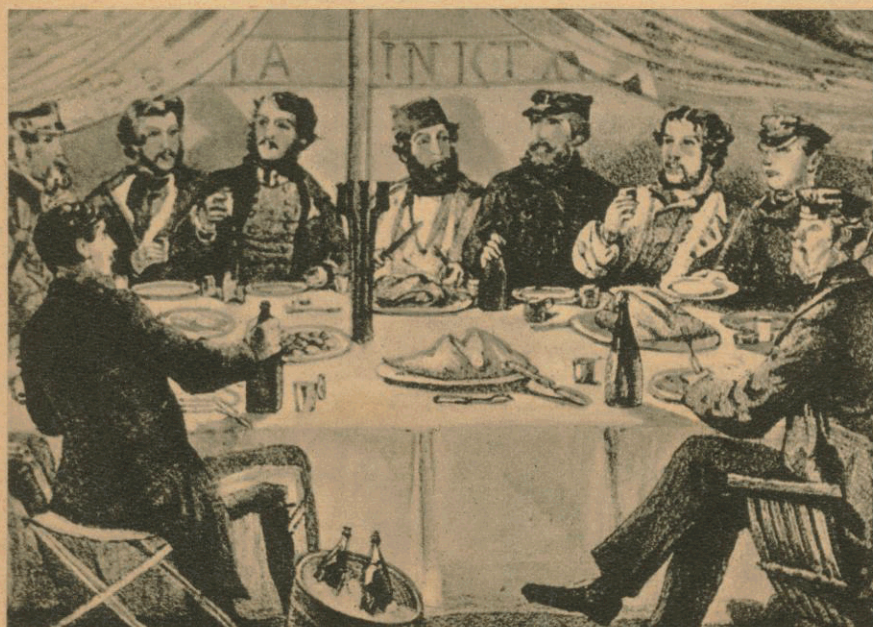
# "GOD BLESS YOU ALL"

Lines of Communication Orders: by  
Lt-Gen. Sir F. W. E. F. Forrester-  
Walker, KCB, CMG, Commanding  
L of C, S. Africa.

CAPE Town, 25 December 1899.  
673 — Christmas Greetings from Her Majesty the Queen.

The following message received on the 25th December 1899 (Christmas Day) by the General-Commanding-in-Chief from her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen is published for general information.

"I wish you and all my brave soldiers a happy Christmas — God protect and bless you all. V.R.I."



Christmas dinner in the Crimea

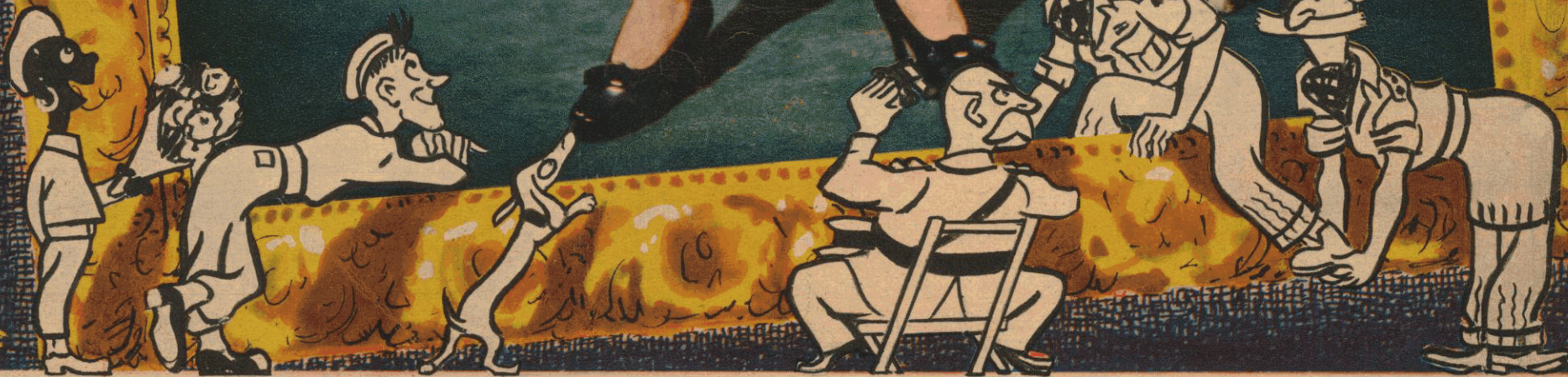


# SOLDIER

THE BRITISH ARMY MAGAZINE

## PRINCIPAL GIRL

The lady inside the frame is Mary Meredith, 19, chorus girl turned star, now playing Princess Balroubadour in "Aladdin" at the Cambridge Theatre, London. The gentlemen outside the frame should stay there.



ROLL IT UP  
AND  
SEND IT HOME



NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

As **SOLDIER**  
weighs more than  
two ounces, a  
penny stamp must  
be affixed here.